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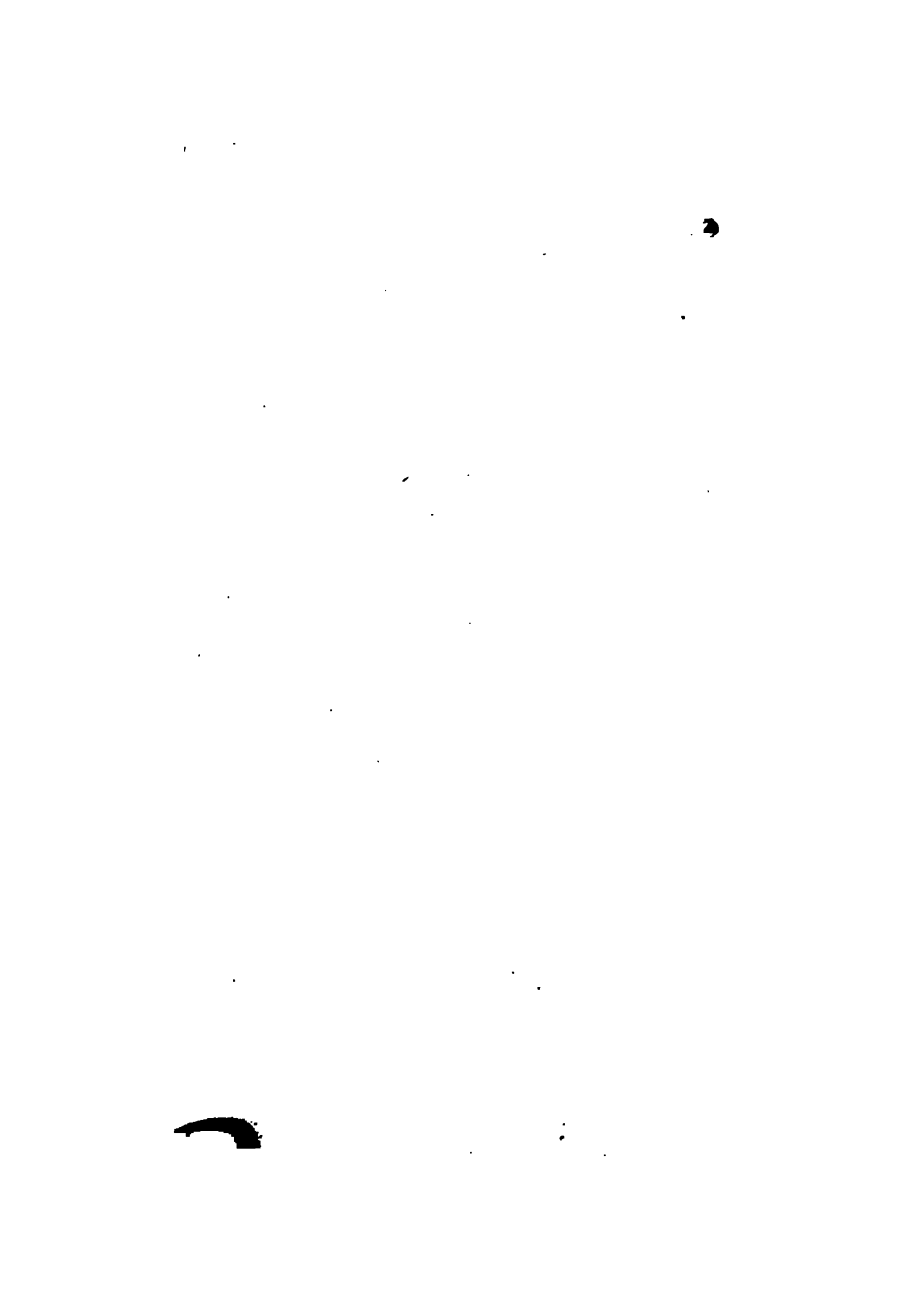
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BALLADS OF GOOD DEEDS

HENRY ABBEY



BALLADS OF GOOD DEEDS.



BALLADS
OF GOOD DEEDS

And Other Verses.

BY
HENRY ABBEY.

HENRY S. KING & Co., LONDON.
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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

IN writing most of these verses, my object was to make a new ballad suitable to the time and to the spirit of democracy or republicanism in my native land. As the early ballads tell a story and often end with a moral, so do these new ballads; but while the former dance to fanciful measures, these keep step with slower music, and speak rather than sing. Not only in the stories have I tried to typify, but in the morals I have literally—however brokenly—expressed that Christian sentiment which should commonly obtain to make a true democracy,—that democracy to which, if I cannot lead, I may at least help to broaden the way.

HENRY ABBEY.

Kingston, New York.

Old events have modern meanings ; only that survives
Of past history which finds kindred in all hearts and lives.

LOWELL.

The instances I produce, how fabulous soever, provided they are possible, serve as well as the true ; whether it has really happened or no, at Rome or at Paris, 'tis still within the verge of possibility, and human capacity, which serves me to good use, and supplies me with variety in the things I write.

MONTAIGNE.

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BALLADS OF GOOD DEEDS.

THE DRAWBRIDGE-KEEPER.

DRECKER, a drawbridge-keeper, opened wide
The dangerous gate to let the vessel through ;
His little son was standing by his side,
Above Passaic River, deep and blue,
While in the distance, like a moan of pain,
Was heard the whistle of the coming train.

At once brave Drecker worked to swing it back,
The gate-like bridge that seems a gate of death ;
Nearer and nearer, on the slender track,
Came the swift engine, puffing its white breath.
Then, with a shriek, the loving father saw
His darling boy fall headlong from the draw.

Either at once down in the stream to spring
And save his son, and let the living freight
Rush on to death, or to his work to cling,
And leave his boy unhelped to meet his fate—
Which should he do ? Were you as he was tried,
Would not your love outweigh all else beside ?

And yet the child to him was full as dear

As yours may be to you—the light of eyes,
A presence like a brighter atmosphere,

The household star that shone in love's mild skies—
Yet, side by side with duty stern and grim,
Even his child became as naught to him.

For Drecker, being great of soul and true,

Held to his work, and did not aid his boy,
Who, in the deep, dark water, sank from view.

Then from the father's life went forth all joy ;
But, as he fell back pallid with his pain,
Across the bridge in safety shot the train.

And yet the man was poor, and in his breast

Flowed no ancestral blood of king or lord ;
True greatness needs no title and no crest

To win from men just honour and reward ;
Nobility is not of rank, but mind,
And is inborn and common in our kind.

He is most noble whose humanity

Is least corrupted. To be just and good
The birthright of the lowest born may be.

Say what we can, we are one brotherhood,
And, rich or poor, or famous or unknown,
True hearts are noble, and true hearts alone.

THE GALLEY-SLAVE.

ALTHOUGH at heart of diverse mould and make,
There lived two brothers who were like in face ;
One did a petty theft, and by mistake
The other was arrested in his place,
And sentenced soon to be a galley-slave—
Yet said no word his prized good name to save.

Trusting remoter days would be more blessed,
He set his will to wear the verdict out,
And knew most men are prisoners at best,
Who some strong habit ever drag about
Like chain and ball ; then meekly prayed that he
Rather the prisoner he was should be.

But best resolves are of such feeble thread,
They may be broken in Temptation's hands.
After long toil, the guiltless prisoner said :
“ Why should I thus, and feel life's precious sands
The narrow of my glass, the present, run,
For a poor crime that I have never done ? ”

Such questions are like cups, and hold reply ;
For when the chance swung wide the prisoner fled.
And gained the country road, and hastened by
Brown furrowed fields and skipping brooklets fed
By shepherd clouds, and felt 'neath sapful trees
The soft hand of the mesmerizing breeze.

Then, all that long day having eaten naught,
He at a cottage stopped, and of the wife
A brimming bowl of fragrant milk besought.
She gave it him ; but, as he quaffed the life,
Down her kind face he saw a single tear
Pursue its wet and sorrowful career.

Within the cot he now beheld a man
And maiden also weeping. " Speak," said he,
" And tell me of your grief ; for, if I can,
I will disroot the sad, tear-fruited tree."
The cottar answered : " In default of rent,
We shall to-morrow from this roof be sent."

Then said the galley-slave : " Whoso returns
A prisoner escaped, may feel the spur
To a right action, and deserves and earns
Proffered reward. I am a prisoner !
Bind these my arms, and drive me back the way,
That your reward the price of home may pay."

Against his wish the cotter gave consent,
And at the prison-gate received his fee ;
Although it was a thing of wonderment,
Along the road where labour paused to see,
That one so weak and sickly dared attack
This bold and robust youth, and take him back.

Straightway the cotter to the mayor hied,
And told him all the story, and that lord
Was much affected, dropping gold beside
The pursed, sufficient silver of reward ;
Then sought his better in authority,
And gained the right to set the prisoner free.

There is no nobler, better life on earth
Than that of conscious, meek self-sacrifice.
Such life our Saviour, in His lowly birth
And holy work, made His sublime disguise,—
Teaching this truth, still rarely understood :
'Tis sweet to suffer for another's good.

THE STOWAWAY BOY.

WHEN three days forth upon the salty sea,

There came out to the deck a little boy ;

Not any means to pay his way had he,

Yet looked up to the broad free sky with joy.

His face was bright and fair, for what is good

Shines out and fears not to be understood.

But on the boy a doubting eye was cast,

And soon there questioned him the master's mate :

He said that his step-father, near a mast

Had hidden him, with food, and bade him wait

Within the place until the ship reached shore,

Where a kind aunt would help him from her store.

The mate was slow to feel the story true,

And thought the sailors gave the boy his food,

And often questioned him before the crew ;

The boy replied with steadfast fortitude.

At last the mate avowed the glaring lie

Should be confessed, or else the boy must die.

Thereat he bade a sailor fetch a rope,

And, pointing to the yard-arm, sternly said :

" Boy, in ten minutes you will be past hope,

And know the solemn silence of the dead,

Unless you speak, and spurn the lie away."

The boy knelt down and asked if he might pray.

Above its hell of fire the tortured steam

Shrieked, hissed, and groaned in terror and in pain ;
Yet worked the ship's great muscles, shaft and beam.

The vessel seemed a sea-gull or a crane
Beating the denser air that floods the world,
And round and round her watery wings were whirled.

The sky bent over the contented sea,

And, like the boy's face, was both pure and clear ;
The ship's folk gathered round him anxiously,

The Lord's Prayer from his earnest lips to hear.
The mate, in tears, by trouble sore oppressed,
Caught up the boy and clasped him to his breast !

Truth's simple grandeur is her priceless wear,

And virtue is the crown upon her head ;
So plain is she that even a child may dare
To take her hand and go where she will tread.
Not her shall serpent Error fascinate :
She strikes it down, and rules in Time and Fate.

Cling thou to Truth and keep her rigid line,

Nor pander to the false on either side ;
Truth dwells with Wisdom, makes the face to shine,
Leads on to honour, is to God allied :
Oh, in thy trial hour, whate'er befall,
Trust her with faith, for she is all in all !

THE HERMIT.

THE holiday was azure-roofed and fair,
And to the Coliseum thronged again
Blithe children, pure and free as summer air,
Fond, tender women, and rude, brawny men ;
And all gaze centred in the ring below,
To view the gladiatorial show.

The late few days had been to waning Rome
A wine of pearls in pleasure's brittle bowl.
There had been pomp of legions marching home,
And civic games, and races to a goal ;
There had been fights with beasts ; and now all breath
Served expectation at the show of death.

This was the triumph which had been decreed
To Stilicho, who, on an Easter-day,
Had met the invading Goth, had made him bleed,
And hurled him o'er the border in dismay.
But with drawn swords the gladiators came
To end the pleasures with a deed of shame.

Feeling the weight of eyes upon them rest,
They came undauntedly, for often pride
Shuts up the dens of fear within the breast.
These men were bold to battle till they died,

But lacked the fortitude, uncommon still,
To offer hind'rance to the general will.

For it is less to face soon-ended death
Than 'tis to face a popular, great wrong.
But bolder he, armed with intrepid breath,
A white-haired hermit, broad of soul and strong,
Who in that deep arena dared intrude
His wise appeal among the multitude.

"This is not pleasure—it is shame!" he cried.

"O people, let these public murders cease!
Here let them fail, and now, lest we be dyed
In guiltless blood again, and mar our peace.
Oh, let us not with sin God's grace repay,
Who gave us might to drive the Goth away!"

Bareheaded, and with naked feet, he stood
Between the fighters in the open place,
Clothed in plain robe. His face was mild and good,
And seemed to shine with kindness for his race;
For there are June-like hearts so warm and free,
They bloom with love for all humanity.

But, round him, loud the Coliseum rang
With disapproval. 'Gainst his kind appeal
The populace exclaimed: "On! on! Let clang
The sharp contention of exciting steel!"

On, gladiators, on ! Nor heed nor look
Turn to the froward babble of this brook ! "

Yet with firm front he stayed the swordsmen back,
True as an arrow to his heart's good aim.
The whirlpool of the people in attack
Surged down upon him, hissing as it came,
And, bruised and buffeted until he died,
He was as drift engulfed in that round tide.

But, when the throng beheld him prone in gore,
His long white locks red-clotted, and his wear
Soiled by fierce feet, at Anger's open door
Stood tearful Pity, innocent and fair.
They loathed what they had done, and from that day
The shows of gladiators passed away.

Oh, great the martyr's blood ! for it can preach
It's owner's cause far better than he knew.
Its very drops are tongued, and utter speech
As voluble as rumour, but all true,
And grander than the thunder that aloud
Fills the wild trumpet of the dark-winged cloud.

THE EGYPTIAN MARINER.

MANY westward leagues we drifted, on our helpless,
unknown way—

Many sunless days we numbered—many starless
nights were o'er,

Ere our ship outrode them tepest, and at drowsy anchor
lay,

In a bay of reaching shadows, near the safe and
peaceful shore.

For that storm, as vast as darkness, long had hovered
on our track,

Or swooped, disgorging fury found beyond the earth
in gloom ;

It enraged the mighty waters that shrank downward,
deep and black,

Or rose in heights white-crested, each an avalanche
of doom.

When the cloudy terror vanished we beheld the land
once more—

The land !—the New Atlantis Grecian Plato dreamed
might be !

And its porphyry cities glistened 'gainst the bluely
distant shore,

Like gems of quenchless splendour on the robe of
trailing sea.

Then the salt breath of the billows blew us in an
evening bay,
Where we saw, deep down, a yearning dream of
starlight in its breast ;
Our brave ship, her wild flight ended, on the flowing
silence lay,
With her empty, worn wings folded, for a while of
useful rest.

We beheld at morn a city, tall with temples altar-
crowned,
A roofed and streeted distance, wheresoe'er the gaze
might sweep ;
Stone resistance, hewn and grated, walled and towered,
circled round,
And fragrant gardens floated, like the lotus, on the
deep.

The living strand was swaying with a wondering, dark
throng,
And a barge swam swiftly toward us, each long arm
a gilded oar ;
Having shown, by signs and tokens, that we should not
suffer wrong,
I was borne, beneath the curtains, to the welcome of
the shore.

As the morning sun, empurpled sat their monarch on
his throne ;

Like Remeses, his benignity shone from his face and
mien ;

There, while I knelt before him, by a weird magician
known,

I was questioned of Osiris, of my country and its
queen.

There they spoke of boundless science, and of art's
ennobling worth,

Of the heart-strength of their land's folk, and of
shocks of war withstood,

And they boasted of their continent, the outstretched
wings of earth,

Whose flight is through the future, to a tree of lasting
good.

For our glimmering instructors, their seers say,
agree

That the slow, sure tide of progress must break over
every ban,

And east, to west outcoming, shall arise and dare be
free ;

Though freedom is but kindness 'mong the brother-
hood of man.

They fed full our greedy sea-bird—laden her with
store of food ;

And gave us other presents formed with hands by
patience taught—

Flowers of plumage, brodered raiment, precious stones
and fragrant wood ;

Then the homeward breezes sighing, in our waiting
wings were caught.

So we sailed away, star-guided, and behind us, each
high tower,

From its priest-watched, burning brazier, its farewell
of flames upcast :

All soon faded, as in slumber's floating garden fades
the flower ;

But we found the crystal harbours of our native land
at last.

Now, beside our common longing to possess the lost
once more,

I feel the westward influence whose power we ever
see,

And I hear the sun's voice calling, " Follow over to the
shore,

That in worthy, coming ages, shall be tolerant and
free."

THE ROMAN SENTINEL.

DEATH, or dishonour, which is best to taste?—

A Roman sentinel in Pompeii,
When God's hot anger laid that city waste,
Answered the question, and resolved to die.
His duty was, upon his post to bide
Till the relief came, let what might betide.

He stood forgotten by the fleeing guard,
Choosing that part which is the bitterest still,—
His face with its fixed purpose cold and hard,
Cut in the resolute granite of his will.
“Better,” he said, “to die, than live in shame;
Death wreathes fresh flowers round a brave man's
name.”

Life is the wave's deep whisper on the shore,
Of a great sea beyond. The sentry saw
That day the light in broad sails hoisted o'er
The drifting boat of dawn; nor dreamed the flaw,
The puff called death, would blow him with them by
Out to the boundless sea beyond the sky.

The sentry watched the mountain's fire-gashed cheeks,
And saw come up the sand's entombing shower.
The storm darts out its red tongue when it speaks,
And fierce Vesuvius, in that wild hour,

Put forth its tongue of flame, and spoke the word
Of hatred to the city from the Lord.

The gloom of seventeen centuries skulked away,
And standing in a marble niche was found
A skeleton in armour all decay ;
The soulless skull was by a helmet crowned,
Cleaving thereon with mingled rust and sand,
And a long spear was in the crumbling hand.

In Pompeii are beasts of stone with wings,
Paved streets with marble temples on each side,
Baths, houses, paintings, monuments of kings ;
But the arched gate whereat the sentry died,
The rusted spear, and helmet with no crest,
Are better far to see than all the rest.

O heart, whatever lot to thee God gives,
Be strong, and swerve not from a blameless way ;
Dishonour hurts the soul that ever lives,
Death hurts the body that is kin with clay.
Though Duty's face is stern, her path is best :
They sweetly sleep who die upon her breast.

THE FRENCH MARSHAL.

MOMAHON up the street of Paris came,
 In triumph from Magenta. Every one
 Had heard and praised the fearless marshal's name,
 And gloried in the deeds that he had done.
 Crowds packed the walks, and at each separate glass
 A face was set to see the hero pass.

Grand music lifted in the morning air
 Its eloquent voice. Loud-mouthed bells were rung,
 Guns boomed till echoes welcomed everywhere ;
 On buildings and in streets the French flag hung,
 And, of a breeze, like fortune, made the toy,
 Thrilled every heart with patriotic joy.

But while the marshal up the street made way,
 There came a little girl clothed all in white,
 Bringing in happy hands a large bouquet ;
 Her flower-sweet face seemed fragrant with delight.
 Well pleased, the soldier, dark and fierce at need,
 Raised up the child before him on his steed.

The pearly necklace of her loving arms
 She bound on him, and laid her Spring-like head
 Against the Autumn of his cheek, with charms
 Of smile and mien ; while to his shoulder fled

Her gold, loose hair with flowers like jewels set,
And made thereon a wondrous epaulet.

He seemed more like an angel than a man,
As, father-like, he paid back each caress ;
Better than all his deeds in war's red van,
Appeared this simple act of tenderness.
The people cried " Huzza ! " and did not pause
Until the town seemed shaken with applause.

So, from this hour, the general became
The boast of the enthusiastic crowd ;
Each gave some flower of praise to deck his fame ;
They knew him brave—though often cold and proud ;
But looked not for the kindness undefiled
That he had beamed upon the loving child.

O cynic, deem no more the world all base,
And scoff no more with either tongue or pen ;
You do not see the face behind the face.
If God exists, there must be noble men ;
And many, who to us seem hard and cold,
Have sunshine in their hearts as pure as gold.

THE EMIR'S CHARITY.

IN Samarcand, the nether Morning Star,
There lived a vizier, treasurer of the king,
Who did not wed until the treasurer, Time,
Had counted down to him his fortieth year.
His loving bride was younger by a score
Of such good coin, and beautiful as dawn.
Mismatched the twain, for she was generous,
And sent no beggar empty from the house ;
Yet gave her own, nor touched her husband's gold.
But he, the treasurer, was miserly,
And tightened up the purse-strings as he said :
" I too must beg unless you cease to give."

The emir in disguise once passed that way,
And, hearing of the kindness of the wife,
Had will to test it. Knocking at the door,
No wife appeared ; but in her stead, in wrath,
The vizier, cursing the rag-clad, crust-fed churl
Who dared to seek for dole and break his peace ;
Then stroked his beard, and swore by Tamerlane,
By the silk cerements and the sacred tomb,
That Charity herself should cease to be.

“Hold ! ” quoth the beggar ; “ say not so of her.
I pray rather that upon the street,
Yea, on the crowded corners of the street,
She yet will stand, this virgin, Charity,
And, hearing her true words, the people there
Will all espouse her cause, and make the world
Mount up and spurn the level of to-day.
Despise no man who asks alms at thy door ;
A precious diamond may be meanly set.
It does not soil the angels’ holy wings
To hover round the poor. I doff disguise !
Behold, I am the emir ! yet, to prove
I am not all devoid of charity,
Still keep the boon of office that I gave.”

Hearing a stranger’s voice, the wife came forth,
And saw her husband kneeling on the step,
And knew the emir’s kind and thoughtful eyes,
And smiled on him and kissed his gentle hand.
And from that day, the alms-folk testify,
No string was tightened round the portly purse ;
But evermore the wife, with cheering smiles,
Doled bountifully to the grateful poor,
Until, at last, when at the door of heaven
She knocked, herself a beggar, Allah smiled
And gave her alms of everlasting peace.

THE EMPEROR'S MERCY.

WHEN Theodosius, who ruled the land,
 Had laid exactions, deemed too hard to bear,
 On Antioch, angry revolt was planned,
 And, hoarsely surging to the public square,
 The folk dashed on the statues of the crown,
 The ruler's and his wife's, and broke them down.

But when the tide of fury ebbed away,
 Upon all hearts there lay a stranded dread.
 The dwellers sorrowed at their deed that day,
 And on Thought's canvas saw their danger spread:
 A sombre painter, born of fault, is Fear,
 That magnifies the ills it makes appear.

So Bishop Flavianus, strong of pen,
 In truth a poet, but who nobly found
 That he a higher good could do to men
 In preaching Christ, than if with laurel crowned,
 Left Antioch, and hastened on his way,
 The ruler's wrath to soften and allay.

He reached Constantinople, and was led
 Before the emperor, who heard his plea :
 " We place a wreath on even the wicked dead.
 Since wrong, repented of, no more can be,

On our dead wrong let now thy pardon rest,
Like a white wreath upon a silent breast."

With darkened look the ruler made reply :

" Pretence can not make sweet what sooth is sour.
Not till forgiveness comes can injury die ;

And, though of pardon one should place the flower
Where, in repentance hearsed, a wrong is lain,
The wrong may rise to violence again.

" You have cast down the statues cut from stone,

And, of the metal of ingratitude,
Reared a colossal shame. This shall be thrown,
In turn, prone to the earth, by vengeance rude.
Let no sleek speech blind Justice enervate !
I am resolved. My word is law and fate."

With saddened soul the bishop turned away ;

But, knowing that, of boys with harps, a choir
Before the emperor made glad the day,

While he reclined at meat, there came desire,
Through these, the singers, to renew his plea,
And with a song the threatened city free.

Straightway, with loving care, he wrote an ode,—

Glad that, at last, to turn the wheel of use,
The sparkling brook of his clear numbers flowed.

" That art is best," he said, " which can induce

To serviceable ends. Of old, art's kings
Were fain to do good work on useful things."

The rhyme was finished, and the balanced words
By music voiced, whose plaintive undertone
Was like the twilight notes of woodland birds.

When from his potent, golden-curtained throne,
The ruler came to feast, like seraphim
The choir with harps took up the song for him.

They sang the wrong and fears of Antioch,
And of the awe of love repentance brings ;
They woke, with fingers swift, a flying flock,
The fine compassion of the trembling strings.
The ruler cried, " Oh, cease your bitter song,
For I forgive the city of the wrong ! "

Spirit of Mercy, child of Love Divine,
By whom, through Christ, the weary may find rest,
Oh, make our souls in unison with thine,
And enter in and dwell in every breast ;
And let it need no more the power of art
To rouse thee from thy slumber in the heart !

THE KING'S SACRIFICE.

For seven years the drought had parched the land,
Yet day by day the sun blazed overhead,
A fire-eyed fiend of fire with flaming brand.
The stretching worm was by toothed famine fed.
No green thing grew, for starved men tilled the mould
In the dry beds where once the rivers rolled.

The fakirs of the swart, abundant gods,
And magi, the consulters of the stars,
In contrite sackcloth, bearing serpent-rods,
Cleft the close air with words like scimitars :
“ The gods demand a human sacrifice—
No rain will fall until the victim dies.”

The wise king sat in council on his throne,
And heard the false priests going up and down :
“ A life ! ” he cried. “ Must ever blood atone ?
I hate its clotted stain upon a crown.
Yet, if I hold my peace, and, at their shrine,
A life be offered, all the stain were mine !

“ Lo, it is somewhat more to be a king,
Than gleam in robes of office, sit in state,
Be first in pomps, and rule in everything.
To love the people—that alone is great !

So I, to prove my love, and give you rain,
Proclaim myself the victim to be slain ! ”

The feigned wrath of their idols to assuage,
Forth for his death they led their upright king ;
Kind Time, the snail to youth, the bird to age,
Had touched him lightly with its passing wing.
Youthful in age he looked, bright-eyed, smooth-browed,
As for the sacrifice he knelt and bowed.

Then, while the headsman held aloft the blade,
A cloud, wet-laden, stole before the sun,
And on the weapon, with a hand of shade,
Laid dusky seizure ; for the Fates had spun
A longer, royal thread. The cloud amain
Scattered aslant its crystal load of rain.

THE CALIPH'S MAGNANIMITY.

A TRAVELLER across the desert waste

Found on his way a cool, palm-shaded spring,
And the fresh water seemed to his pleased taste,

In all the world, the most delicious thing.

"Great is the caliph!" said he; "I for him
Will fill my leathern bottle to the brim."

He sank the bottle, forcing it to drink

Until the gurgle ceased in its lank throat;
Then started on once more, and smiled to think

He bore for thirst God's only antidote.

Days after, with obeisance low and meet,

He laid his present at the caliph's feet.

And soon the issue of the spring was poured

In a gold cup, on whose embossed outside
Jewels, like solid water, shaped a gourd.

The caliph drank, and seemed well satisfied,
Nay, wisely pleased, and straightway gave command
To line with gold the man's work-hardened hand.

The courtiers now, seeing the round reward,

Fancied some unheard, wondrous virtue graced
The bottled burden borne for their loved lord,

And of the liquid gift asked but to taste.

The caliph answered from his potent throne,

"Touch not the water; it is mine alone!"

But soon, after the humble giver went,
O'erflowing with delight, which bathed his face,
The caliph told his courtiers the intent
Of his denial, saying : " It is base
Not to accept a kindness, if 'tis pressed
With no low motive of self-interest.

"The water was a gift of love to me
Which I with golden gratitude repaid.
I would not let the honest giver see
That, on its way, the crystal of the shade
Had changed, and was impure. For so, no less,
His love, thus scorned, had turned to bitterness.

"I granted not the warm, distasteful draught
To asking lips, because of firm mistrust,
Or kindly fear, that, if another quaffed,
He would reveal his feeling of disgust,
And he who meant a favour would depart,
Bearing a wounded and dejected heart."

O spring of kindness in life's desert found,
O'ershaded fondly by the palms of peace,
Rise everywhere, and in each heart abound,
That strife and anger may decline and cease !
No traveller need fear to give from thee,
For there is naught can mar thy purity.

THE JEW'S FAITH.

IN the old days, in Alexandria, dwelt
 Nicanor, a self-sacrificing Jew,
 Who honestly in every matter dealt,
 Until his spreading tree of fortune grew
 Beyond the small, dwarfed stature of his needs,
 And each bent bough bore reproducing seeds.

And then, like him who, walking up the way,
 Turns round to question him that comes behind,
 He, turning, faced his heart and asked one day :
 "What shall I make my duty ? Fixed, my mind
 Demands its aim must now be understood,
 For every man should live for some set good."

Thereto his heart made answer : "Lips are fair ;
 Make two vast doors for lips, and go with them,
 And hinge them on the Temple's mouth, that there
 They long may name thee to Jerusalem :
 With lily-work and palm thy doors be made,
 And both with beaten copper overlaid."

In time the lips were wrought, and, with much gain,
 He stowed them on a bark, and sailed away ;
 And saw the land fade forth from off the main,
 While 'neath the sun the rippled waters lay

Like the great roof that Solomon of old
Built on the Temple, spiked with goodly gold.

When certain days flew west a storm came up,
And night was like a black and fearful cave
Where Powers of Awe held banquet : as cloud-cup
Struck waved cloud-cup, the clash deep thunder gave,
And spilled the wine of rain. The thrilling gloom
Was filled with loud though unseen wings of doom.

Then said the master of the worried keel :

“ Vile Jew, thy doors are heavy : they must go ! ”
Nicanor cried : “ Here, at thy feet, I kneel,
And crave of thee to spare them. I will throw
My goods away and gold, my proof of thrift ;
But spare the doors—to God my humble gift.

“ Despise me not ; for he who scorns a Jew
Without just cause, himself shall be despised.”
Thereat his gains he gathered up and threw
Into the sea, till all were sacrificed
Except his gift ; but still the Pan-like blast
Piped on the reed of each divested mast.

Up spoke the sailors to their master dark :

“ We late made mention to our gods of this,
And they require we shall unload the bark
Of the vile Jew and all that may be his.”

As the dread judgment meek Nicanor heard,
He radiantly smiled, but said no word.

Then in the deep the lofty doors were thrown.

Nicanor prayed, " I put my trust in Thee ! "
And sprang out to the storm, and scaled alone,
'Gainst Death, the unceasing rampart of the sea.
He sank and rose ; but, going down once more,
His wandering hand seized on a drifting door.

• Dripping and weak, he crawled upon his float,
And heard the cry go past, " The ship is lost ! "
Then shrieks, death-ended. Swords of storm that smote
Were now soon sheathed, while flags of foam that
tossed

Were furled in peace, and good Nicanor found
The lip there kissed the sweet and certain ground.

A cape ran out, a long, rock-sinewed arm
That buffeted the sea, and this had caught
The Jew and both his doors ; and, free of harm,
He stood in dawn's gray surf. Stout help he brought,
And, passing safely inland far and fast,
The gifts were on the Temple hinged at last.

Long centuries succeed, and Herod, king,
Rose to rebuild the Temple. For rough stone,
He reared stone snow, white marble. Each pure thing
He beautified. Nicanor's doors alone

Were left. "These," said the wise high-priests,
"shall be
For a memorial of piety."

Danger ennobles duty simply done,
And is a test wherein is cast for proof
The ore of faith. There comes no fear to one
Whose faith is true, for though upon that roof
Where only Christ of flesh has firmly trod,
He stands on rock who puts his trust in God.

THE BEDOUIN'S REBUKE.

NEBAR, a Bedouin of noble heart,

That from all men received of praise the fee,
Owned a brave horse, with which he would not part,
Because from death he once had run him free.
The man and beast were friends, and it is vice
To sell our friend or friendship for a price.

The horse was black and strong, his step was proud ;
His neck was arched, his ear alert for sound ;
His speed the tempest's, and his mane a cloud ;
His hoofs woke thunder from the desert ground ;
His eyes flashed lightning from their inmost core :
Victor of Distance was the name he bore.

Daher, a Bedouin of another tribe,

Had often wished to buy this famous beast ;
And as he smoked, and heard his friends describe
Its comely parts and powers, the wish increased ;
But Nebar said the horse should not be sold,
Though offered wealth in camels and in gold.

Then Daher put on rags, and stained his face,

And went to wait for Nebar, seeming lame.
Him soon he saw approach with daring pace
Upon the envied horse, and as he came
He cried to him : "For three days on this spot
Have I lain starving—pity me my lot."

And, seeing Nebar stop, said on, "I die—
My strength is gone!" Down Nebar sprang,
And raised him gently, with a pitying sigh,
And set him on his horse. A laugh outrang,
And Daher shouted as he plunged his spurs,
"Fair price refused, one sells at last for burrs."

"Stay! stay!" cried Nebar; Daher paused to hear:
"Since Heaven has willed that you my beast should
take,

I wish you joy; but tell no man, for fear
Another who was really starved might make
Appeal in vain; for some, remembering me,
Would fail to do an act of charity."

Oh, sharp as steel to Daher seemed remorse!
He paused a moment, then sprang to the ground,
And with bowed head brought Nebar back his horse;
And, falling on his honest breast, he wound
His arms about his neck for true amends,
And ever afterward the two were friends.

If all of us, whene'er we suffer wrong,
Should bear it mildly, since God wills it so,
Nor lend our speech to anger, like the song
The morning stars sang life would pass below:
For he who lightly draws the sword of wrath,
Wounds most himself, and crowds with strife his path.

THE PATRIOT'S COURAGE.

WHEN our free land's great captain, Washington,
Was colonel in Virginia, ere the war
He led for Independence was begun,
A passing cloud obscured his rising star :
His sometimes frightful passions woke, and they,
Then unbroke coursers, had their fiery way.

For while between the adverse factions there
The bloodless battle by the ballot rolled,
Into one's pride whom he had found unfair
He plunged a speech-wrought weapon keen and
cold ;
And the hurt voter, with a blow unmeet,
Stretched the insulter senseless at his feet.

Forth hied the dread news, waxing as it went,
Fed by the food it gave to every tongue ;
Uprose, wild-eyed, the wrathful regiment,
And idle sword and flintlock were unhung,
And followed on the drum, whose sounding call
Was like the beating of the hearts of all.

When grief has rage all pity turns to stone ;
These loved their leader as they loved their land ;
As shining rain, aslant their muskets shone,
And harsh the voice of vengeance pealed command :

"All foully slain our colonel lies, struck down !
On, comrades ! Give no quarter ! Burn the town !"

Meanwhile, the stricken was made whole again,
And, hurried by the townsfolk, rode to meet
The armed, excited torrent of fierce men
Advancing toward the electoral, small street ;
And holden in their wondering, glad sight,
They pressed around with fondness and delight.

But vengeance is so inconsiderate,
'Reft of excuse it yet pursues its prey,
And the battalions, filled with gathered hate,
Were willed to leave black ruin on their way.
He charged them, lest the love he bore should cease,
To bate their wrath and turn again in peace.

The stilled flood ebbed. Slowly he too returned,
Chastising his quick passions ruthlessly ;
For who, that with a foolish rage has burned,
Knows blame as bitter as his own may be ?
But when red morn rolled up its splendid wheel,
Joy followed close on Sorrow's fleeing heel.

For then betimes, a lark-blithe letter flew
Out of a heart where kindness brooded warm ;
But to the voter's short and narrow view,
It was the white-winged augury of storm.

It asked a meeting only, yet he heard
Of challenge and of duel in the word.

For who could know that one would be so bold,
To face and brave the time? in that it meant
That each his honour on his sword should hold?
The voter straightway to the other went,
And Washington, with courage strong and grand,
Held forth his prudent and heroic hand.

And smilingly, with accents kind and glad,
To him who struck him down he made amends :
“If with the satisfaction you have had,
You are content, oh, let us then be friends !
For, looking back on our affray with shame,
I feel that I alone have been to blame.”

Such courage is the soul's fine-fibred steel ;
All other is misnamed and is untrue.
What matter if a thousand wrongs we feel ?—
The better part that courage has to do,
Is to forgive them. Fame such heart-strength won,
Jewels the golden name of Washington.

THE ARTIST'S PRAYER.

WASHINGTON ALLSTON, in a foreign land,
 Went to his studio, and knelt to pray,
 Starving and weak, with want on either hand.
 Conscience had risen in his heart that day,
 As unto Saul when hedged about with foes,
 The accusing prophet out of death arose.

Within the vast cathedral of the night,
 The stars, the altar-lamps, their thanks outshine ;
 Yet he, the painter, from whose soul shone bright
 The nobler fire of genius, God's divine
 And greatest gift to man, had never cast
 One ray of gratitude for mercies past.

" I have been most ungrateful, Lord," he said.
 " Bound up in self, I have forgotten Thee ;
 Yet now, I pray, vouchsafe me this day's bread,
 And I will pay of my poor thanks the fee,
 As I now pay for favours heretofore——"
 The irreverent knocker clanked upon the door.

Marquis of Stafford there the threshold crossed.

" Who bought," he asked, " your ' Angel Uriel ' ? "—
 " It is not sold."—" Not sold ! Then name the cost,
 And I shall make it mine." So it befell

That friendship followed, and the painter came
To better days, and had the use of fame.

Oh ! half the good that daily blooms for men
Is from the seed of prayer. God gives success
Often to test our gratitude, and then
Withdraws it, if we lack, with tenderness ;
Yet if we turn, and of His help implore,
A blessing is already at the door.

THE SINGER'S ALMS.

IN Lyons, in the mart of that French town,
Years since, a woman leading a fair child,
Craved a small alms of one who, walking down
The thoroughfare, caught the child's glance, and
smiled
To see, behind its eyes, a noble soul.
He paused, but found he had no coin to dole.

His guardian angel warned him not to lose
This chance of pearl to do another good;
So as he waited, sorry to refuse
The asked-for penny, there aside he stood,
And with his hat held as by limb the nest,
He covered his kind face, and sang his best.

The sky was blue above, and all the lane
Of commerce where the singer stood was filled,
And many paused, and, listening, paused again,
To hear the voice that through and through them
thrilled.
I think the guardian angel helped along
That cry for pity woven in a song.

The singer stood between the beggars there,
Before a church, and, overhead, the spire,
A slim perpetual finger in the air
Held toward heaven, land of the heart's desire,
As though an angel, pointing up, had said,
"Yonder a crown awaits this singer's head."

The hat of its stamped brood was emptied soon
Into the woman's lap, who drenched with tears
Her kiss upon the hand of help. 'Twas noon,
And noon in her glad heart drove forth her fears.
The singer pleased, passed on, and softly thought,
"Men will not know by whom this deed was wrought."

But when at night he came upon the stage,
Cheer after cheer went up from that wide throng,
And flowers rained on him. Naught could assuage
The tumult of the welcome, save the song
That for the beggars he, with covered face,
Had sung while standing in the market-place.

Oh! cramped and narrow is the man who lives
Only for self, and pawns his years away
For gold, nor knows the joy a good deed gives;
But feels his heart shrink slowly, day by day,
And dies at last, his bond of fate outrun;
No high aim sought, no worthy action done.

But brimmed with molten brightness like a star,
And broad and open as the sea or sky,
The generous heart. Its kind deeds shine afar,
And glow in gold in God's great book on high.
And he who does what good he can each day,
Makes smooth and green and strews with flowers his
way.

THE RINGER'S VENGEANCE.

In Florence, years ago, there dwelt a youth,
 Broad-shouldered, fair in face, and tall and strong,
 Plighted to one he loved in very truth—

A lady proud, whose black hair, fine and long,
 Some said, was like a flag, that waved or fell
 Above her heart's deceitful citadel.

To these the days were bright, as days may be
 To all who love as lovers always should ;
 But one fell night a cry of dread ran free,
 And one beloved in deadly peril stood.
 About her house the hot flames roared and broke
 In waves of fire that dashed a spray of smoke.

Prone on the seat within her oriel
 The lady sank ; then he, her lover, came
 And lowered her to the street ; but it befell
 That, as he turned back 'mid the leaping flame,
 The roof fell in, and to the crackling floor
 The heavy beams his sturdy body bore.

They brought him forth, all bleeding, burned, and crushed,
 And long he lay, and neither stirred nor spoke ;
 Not yet by wayward death his heart was hushed,
 But seemed a blacksmith pounding, stroke by stroke,
 And working on through night from sun to sun,
 Until his fateful labour would be done.

"My love," soon mused the youth, "must love me
well,

She will be true and kind to me, I know,
And life will brim with sunshine where we dwell ;

All's for the best, since God has willed it so.
I long once more to see her sweet and fair,
And kiss the ripples of her mouth and hair.

"Dear love ! she will behold me with her heart,
And pity me, because my lot is hard ;
She will not look upon this outer part

That for her sake is crippled and is scarred."
False hope, poor heart !—for, when the lady came,
She turned away with loathing, to her shame.

As one in swamps sees fireflies flare in gloom,
And fancies them the street-lights of a town
Whose spires and domes among the shadows loom,
Yet finds at dawn but lowland, so came down
The hope-built future, and the sufferer found
Beneath his feet the waste and useless ground.

Yet Sorrow brings no dagger in her hand
To slay the heart with whom she comes to dwell ;
The youth lived on, and he was wont to stand
Before a church, and listen to the bell
That in a great spire, bright with golden gloss,
Laughed from its yellow throat beneath the cross.

Then loss of wealth with other damage fell,
And for a beggar's pittance he became
The ringer of the wide-mouthed, thick-lipped bell,
Whose noisy somersets he made proclaim
Vesper or mass or lovers to be wed,
Or pulled it with large pity for the dead.

And now they bade him ring a joyful peal ;
For she who once had clothed his heart with pain,
Before the altar 'neath the bell would kneel,
And wed another. Then, for good or bane,
There came two spirits out of east and west,
And wrestled fiercely in the Ringer's breast.

All the long night before the wedding-morn
He in the belfry stayed and worked, dark-browed,
And, as he looked forth when the day was born,
The better spirit in his heart was cowed.
The nails were drawn, the beams made weak at last,
Which once had held the great bell firm and fast.

The Ringer saw the landscape, and to him
It was a cup, and there the red sun stood,
A drop of splendid wine upon the rim,
And clouds arose, clothed on with cloak and hood,
And, with their stained lips at the crimson brink,
Seemed monstrous genii who had come to drink.

They came in time with followers in a file—

 The happy bridegroom and the smiling bride ;
They passed the portal and came up the aisle,
 And knelt down at the altar, side by side.
The bride looked up beneath her veil of lace,
And saw with fear the Ringer's livid face.

Then sprang he to the rope to ring her knell,

 With all the inclement anger of his soul ;
The huge inverted lily of the bell
 Shook in the gust, and, with a last loud toll,
Fell from its place, and, echoing near and wide,
Crushed 'neath its weight the Ringer and the bride.

Revenge is base, and bitter at the core,

 And in a noble mind will never grow ;
Yet there are times when it is somewhat more,
 And is almost like Justice—for we know
That there are wrongs so deep there seems no cure,
Save in dire retribution swift and sure.

Yet meek Forgiveness, in her gentle reign,

 Repays in time in dividends of good.
Who doubts that, had the Ringer borne his pain
 He had obtained the noblest brotherhood ?
For wrongs that are forgiven in our sin
Are doors where loving angels enter in

BELLEROPHON.

SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON writes of one
 Who strove by charms, and with the aid of ghosts,
 Of making gold to find the secret out :
 Who drew a magic ring about his crucible,
 And while they laboured fast at alchemy,
 He to beat back the adverse ghosts essayed.
 At last, within the circle he had drawn,
 Was placed a monstrous Foot, so large, his face
 Was level with the instep. All in vain
 Each puny effort to drive back the Foot.

Oh ! hard for him, who, having once let in
 Upon the charmed circle of the good
 The first advance of error, strives to oust
 The evil, and make fair the round again :
 The giant Foot, stock-still, will not retreat.

And I bethink me him, who in the past,
 Before Christ's ransom purchased all our sins,
 And in a land that did not know of God,
 Upon the Plain of Wandering, the Aleian Plain,
 Walked silently beneath the silent stars,
 And kept the circle of the good intact,
 And to his true heart cogitated thus :

“Antea, wife of Proetus, tempted me.
She, in the palace, where the fountains are,
Met me at twilight as she walked alone,
Clad with uncinctured robe, adorned with gems,
Perfumed with all the spices of the East.
She made her arms a girdle for my neck,
And, lifting both her small, gold-sandalled feet,
Hung her full weight upon me. Her lips’ bud
Bloomed to a crimson rose against my own.
My beard touched her white cheek, while in my ear
She told the eager whisper of her love.

“I drew back, scornfully surprised, and hissed
Between set teeth a menace ’gainst all sin.
She left me thus, and went to him, her liege,
And with the broken fragments of her speech—
Bits of the jar that could not hold her tears—
She let it fall that I had done her wrong.

“So, in dire wrath, the fierce king called for me,
And on a tablet writing fatal characters,
He sent me forth with them beyond his realm,
To Lycia, to the king thereof, who met
And entertained me by the Xanthus’ tide.
Nine days of feasting passed, and on the tenth
The tablets were unsealed, their purport known—
And their base appetite is gorged to-day.

“But first the Chimæra I slew invincible.
She was in front a lion, and behind
A dragon, and between the two a goat.
Her breath was gleaming fire that uttered forth,
And burned the woodlands where she passed in wrath.
And her indeed I slew and gave to death.
I fought with Solymi, the Illustrious,
I slew the man-opposing Amazons,
I turned to nought the secret ambushcade,
And won new lustre to my blameless name.

“But what if I had listened to the queen,
And had become the servant of her wish?
I hold, the soul is like a piece of cloth,
Which, being stained, is stained for evermore—
That nothing can erase the stain of sin.

“Suppose, death’s darkness past, I knelt me down
Upon the first gold step of great Jove’s throne,
My soul a piece of cloth within my hands,
All smeared and soiled and stained with Antea’s sin,
And said :

“ ‘Great Jove, accept this cloth, I pray :
Thou madest it. The texture is as fine
As the loose woof of clouds, or the worm’s silk.
These blots and stains are most like roses strewn.’

“ Then would great Jove make answer, scorning me :
‘ O fool, and blind ! to mock the mighty gods ;
For on the golden texture of the soul,
Only a noble deed seems like a flower.’

“ Well, whoso wills shall always have his way,
And what was right that I had willed to do.”

AGNES HATOT.

(A.D. 1890.)

WHEN Might made law in days of chivalry,
Hatot and Ringsdale, over claims to land,
Darkened their lives with stormy enmity ;
And for their rights agreed this test to stand :
To fight steel-clad till either's blood made wet
The soil disputed—and a time was set.

But Hatot sickened when the day drew near,
And strength lay racked which once had been his
boast.
Then Agnes, his fair daughter, for the fear
That in proud honour he would suffer most,
Resolved to do the battle in his name,
And leave no foothold for the tread of Shame.

She, at the gray, first coming of the day,
Shook off still sleep, and from her window gazed.
The west was curtained with night's dark delay ;
A cold and waning moon in silence raised
Its bent and wasted finger o'er the vale,
And seemed sad Death who beckoned, wan and pale.

But Hope sails past the rugged coasts of Fear ;
For while awakened birds sang round her eaves,
Our Agnes armed herself with knightly gear
Of rattling hauberk and of jointed greaves ;
Withal she put on valour, that to feel,
Does more for victory than battle-steel.

She had a sea of hair, whose odour sweet,
And golden softness, in a moonless tide
Went rippling toward the white coast of her feet ;
But as beneath a cloud the sea may hide,
So in her visored, burnished helmet, there,
Beneath the cloud-like plume, was hid her hair.

Bearing the mighty lance, sharp-spiked and long,
She at the sill bestrode her restless steed.
Her kneeling soul prayed God to make her strong,
And prayer is nearest path to every need.
She clattered on the bridge, and on apace,
And met dread Ringsdale at the hour and place.

They clash in onslaught. Steel to steel replies.
The champed bit foams. Rider and ridden fight.
Each feels the grim and brutal instinct rise
That in forefront of havoc takes delight,
The lightning of the lances flashed and ran
Until, at last, the maid unhorsed the man.

Then, on her steed, she, bright-eyed, flushed, and glad,
Her helmet lifted in the sylvan air ;
And from the iron concealment which it had,
The noiseless ocean of her languid hair
Broke in dishevelled waves. The cross and heart,
Jewels that latched her vest, she drew apart.

“ Lo, it is Agnes, even I ! ” she said,
“ Who with my trusty lance have thrust you down !
For hate of shame the fray I hazarded ;
And yet, not me the victory should crown,
But God, the Merciful, who helps the right,
And lent me strength to conquer in the fight.”

NATHAN AND MITHRIDANES.

NATHAN, a wise man, who had nursed with care

A tree of trade which bore sufficient coin,
Lived not alone for self, but thought to share

His wealth with others ; so at once to join
His thought to action, where the chief roads crossed
He reared a palace, fair and white as frost.

Here, food he laid, and smooth wine made to flow

For all who came from either east or west ;
Beggars were not too base for him to know,
And each was served as an invited guest ;
And when at last there broke the parting day,
He doled them gifts, and saw them on their way.

From these mere springs, his fame in rivers flowed,

And proud Mithridanes, not taking heed
That charities for praise of men corrode
And lose their virtue, thought the same good deed
He too might do and win as high renown,
For Nathan's name was better than a crown.

So he too built a palace wide and high,

And clad it with the banners of his land ;
The prosperous towers grasped the golden sky,
The fragrant fountains tossed on either hand ;

And this, and Nathan's palace, seemed to be
Let down from heaven for deeds of charity.

But proud Mithridanes was envious still,
As Nathan's name was held above his own ;
And soon he willed to go to him and kill
The generous man, that he, and he alone
Through the broad world might gain the fame he could
For large munificence and doing good.

See how vile Envy may mislead our hearts,
And feed us with unpalatable sin !
Mithridanes for Nathan's door departs,
And, reaching it, with peace is welcomed in ;
Even a parrot, up a stairway heard,
Stabs at his envy with a friendly word.

But ere the hospitable roof was won,
He overtook an ancient on the road.
" Tell me how near my journey now is done ;
I go to Nathan and his praised abode."
" I am his servant," said the old man gray,
" I shall ride forward with you on your way."

This man was Nathan, though unknown to him
Whose deadly purpose slumbered in his breast ;
And often in the park, as day waned dim,
They met thereafter, one with gloom oppressed,

And talked of Honour and her favourite few,
Till from the commerce wealth of friendship grew.

Here on the root-veined soil-flesh of the world,
The comer told the white-beard that he sought
The murder of his rival—that, fast furled,
No more the name of Nathan should be caught,
And banner-like, o'er hill and vale be sent
As the most wise and most benevolent.

“I shall see to it you are gratified,”
Meek Nathan said ; “ for at the bud of day
Your foe will walk these time-ringed trees beside,
And you may fall on him, and be away
Before his death is bruited : lest in wrath
They should pursue you, flee the mountain-path.”

At morn went forth the guest to slay the host,
And saw the old man walking mid the trees,
The friend he of all others loved the most.

“Lo, I am Nathan ! great Mithridanes ;
Here, where the heart is, pierce me to the hilt ;
Pause not with fear, but slay me if thou wilt.”

Then at his feet the guest fell prone, with tears :
“My dearest father, I was proud and base ;
Forgive me, for remorse in after-years
Will rack me, when I think upon thy face !

No more my envy makes a foe of thee,
For I behold thy vast humility."

"Arise!" said Nathan. "Though I do forgive,
I need not; for, in wishing to excel,
You have done nothing wrong. Proud monarchs live
Who, to be great, have thought it wise and well
To slay whole armies on the field of strife;
But you have only sought my humble life."

The pleasant jewel of good Nathan's face
Shone with the inborn lustre of his soul,
And, when the other stood up in his place,
With full forgiveness round his neck he stole
His amicable arms. Thus malice passed,
And mild peace triumphed in its stead at last.

Humility is the excess of love
We have for others—if that be excess
Which He, who for our help came from above,
And wore our humbler nature, loved to bless;
But Envy is the coward side of Hate,
And all her ways are bleak and desolate.

PHIDIAS.

In Athens, when all learning centred there,
 Men reared a column of surpassing height
 In honour of Minerva, wise and fair ;
 And on the top, which dwindled to the sight,
 A statue of the goddess was to stand,
 That wisdom might obtain in all the land.

And he who, with the beauty in his heart,
 Seeking in faultless work immortal youth,
 Would mould this statue with the finest art,
 Making the wintry marble glow with truth,
 Should gain the prize. Two sculptors sought the
 fame—
 The prize they craved was an enduring name.

Alcamenes soon carved his little best ;
 But Phidias, beneath a dazzling thought
 Which like a bright sun in a cloudless west
 Lit up his wide, great soul, with pure love wrought
 A statue, and its face of changeless stone
 With calm, far-sighted wisdom towered and shone.

Then to be judged the labours were unveiled ;

But, at the marble thought, that by degrees
Of hardship Phidias cut, the people railed.

“ The lines are coarse, the form too large,” said
these ;

“ And he who sends this rough result of haste
Sends scorn, and offers insult to our taste.”

Alcamenes' praised work was lifted high

Upon the capital where it might stand ;

But there it seemed too small, and 'gainst the sky

Had no proportion from the uplooking land ;

So it was lowered, and quickly put aside,

And the scorned thought was mounted to be tried.

Surprise swept o'er the faces of the crowd,

And changed them as a sudden breeze may change

A field of fickle grass, and long and loud

Their mingled shouts to see a sight so strange.

The statue stood completed in its place,

Each coarse line melted to a line of grace.

So bold, great actions that are seen too near,

Look rash and foolish to unthinking eyes ;

They need the past for distance to appear

In their true grandeur. Let us yet be wise,

And not too soon our neighbour's deed malign,

Lest that which we despise should be divine.

GUYOT OF MARSEILLES.

THE life misunderstood is sad as tears ;
 Its outer seeming courts the stab of scorn ;
 It sits apart, and, bearing gibes and sneers,
 Feeds on the lonely hope to which 'tis born.
 It is a murmuring shell, whose rough outside
 Shows not the beauties that within abide.

Such life was noble Guyot's of Marseilles.

By patient industry he won his way,
 And, from whatever heaven streamed the gales,
 They blew him favour, for he worked each day,
 And trenched on night for further hours to use,
 Taxing inactive sleep for revenues.

The silver cord was loosened, and he bent
 Grave-seeking over ; but he half denied
 The wheaten fuel, coals of nutriment,
 Which keep the hungry fire of life supplied.
 He wore mere rags against the shivering frost,
 And, from his youth up, shunned the ways of cost.

His rooms were mean, and on the bare, board floor
 He slept on straw, and oft the freezing air
 Hissed through the dusty seams and broken door,
 As if to drive his purpose from him there ;

But purpose, kin to sufferance, heeds no cold,
And habits turn to needs as men grow old.

The world condemns the miser : in the street
The rich passed Guyot with an honest sneer ;
Even the poor folk, whom he chanced to meet,
Hooted and scoffed and after flung a jeer,
For scorn of him who basely would withhold
The cheapest comforts for the sake of gold.

They found him lying dead upon his straw ;
And thus, or with like meaning, ran his will :
“ In early youth, in fair Marseilles, I saw
The poor with water were supplied but ill,
And I gain's golden flower have widely plucked,
And here bequeath, to build an aqueduct.”

Oh, creeping water of the mountain-spring,
Oh, dimpled water of the laughing brooks,
Oh, water of the river, whispering
To the low bough which at its likeness looks,
Publish in crystal, through the dells and dales,
Of Guyot, noble Guyot of Marseilles !

KARAGWF.

"Because the sun hath looked upon me."

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

I

AN African, thick-lipped and heavy-heeled,
 With woolly hair, large eyes, and even teeth,
 A forehead high, and beetling at the brows
 Enough to show a strong perceptive thought
 Ran out beyond the eyesight in all things—
 A savage with no knowledge we possess
 Of science, art, or books, or government—
 A captive black bereft of rights, enthralled,
 Brought from a slaver off the Georgia coast,
 His life a thing of price with market rate;
 Yet in the face of all, a brave, true man,
 Kara-gwé, named for an Afric tribe.

His buyer was the planter Dalton Earl,
 Of Valley Earl, an owner of broad lands,
 Whose wife, in some cold daybreak of the past,
 Had tarried with the shadows of the night;
 But parting, left him of their love, a child
 Whom he called Coralline. By sad waves tossed,

She was a spray of coral fair to see,
Found on the shore where death's impatient deep
Hems in the narrow continent of life.

II.

Each day brought health and strength to Karagwe;
Each day he worked where white the cotton grew,
And every boll he picked had thought in it.
Strange fancies, faced with ignorance and doubt,
Came crowding, peering in his heathen mind,
Like men who, gathered in some rich bazaar,
Elbow to see arrive the caravan.

All things to him were wonderful and new.
What were the papers that his owner read?
What meant the black and ant-like characters?
He found a leaf of them and gazed at it,
Trying to understand their voiceless speech.
This, Dalton Earl with cloudy look beheld,
And seized the print, commanding that the slave
Have twenty lashes for this breach of law.

Long on his sentence pondered Karagwe.
Against the law? Who then would make a law
Decreeing knowledge to a few proud men,—
To others ignorance? Surely not God;

The white-haired negro with a text had said
That God loved justice, and was Friend to all.

With blood replying redly to each stroke,
With dark skin clinging ghastly to the whip,
The slave bore up beneath his punishment ;
His heart, indignant, shaking his broad breast,
Strong as the heart that Hippodamia wept,
Which with the cold, intrusive brass thrust through,
Shook the Greek spear to its extremity.

III.

Henceforth the black man's energy, enforced
By the one vile argument of the lash,
Pursued a quest for knowledge, and secured
In paths familiar many a pleasant flower.
The old slave preacher knew the alphabet,
And taught it, when he might, to Karagwe,
Whose books were crumbs of paper printed on,
Found here and there, strewed by the handless wind.
He studied in the woods and near the falls
Which shoot in watery arrows from the cliff,
Feathered with spray and barbed with hues of flint.

Once, looking up, he saw, upon the verge,
Fair baby Coralline, who, laughing, leaned
O'er the abyss to grasp a butterfly.

Ere he had climbed the difficult, steep height,
A shriek rose shrill above the water's roar ;
The child had fallen, and a quadroon girl
Upon the treacherous sward lay swooned away.
The child had fallen, but was yet unharmed.
Karagwe slipped down where ran a narrow ledge,
And reaching forth caught fast the little frock,
Whose folds were tangled in a bending shrub,
And drew his frightened burden safely back.

The slave told no man of this perilous deed,
Nor spoke of any merit he possessed,
Or any worthy act that he had done.

IV.

By being always when he could alone,
By often wandering in the woods and fields,
He came at last to live in revery.
But little thought is there in revery,
But little thought, for most is useless dream ;
And whoso dreams may never learn to act.
The dreamer and the thinker are not kin.
Sweet revery is like a little boat
That idly drifts along a listless stream—
A painted boat, afloat without an oar.

The negro preacher with the text had said
That when men died, the soul lived on and on :
If so, of what material was the soul ?
The eyes could not behold it : might not then
The viewless air be filled with living souls ?
Not these alone, but other vague, strange forms,
Around us at all times could dwell unseen.
If a i r was only matter rarefied,
W h y might not things still more impalpable
Have real existence ? Whence came our thoughts ?
They were not ours. He fancied that they all,
Or good, or bad, were whispered to the soul :
The bad were the suggestions of a shape
With measureless black wings, that when it dared,
Set its clawed foot upon the necks of men ;
But, winged with light, a spirit eloquent
Named Wisdom, with his son, Humanity,
Whispered good thoughts, and told this groping heart,
No splendour of the sunset would compare
With the great glory of a noble deed.

He proudly dreamed that to no other mind
Had been revealed these trite imaginings.
Alas ! poor heart, how many have awoke,
And found their newest thoughts not new but old,
Their brightest fancies woven in the silk

Of ancient poems, history or romance,
And knowledge still elusive and far off !

V.

Ruth, the quadroon who fainted on the cliff,
Now a most conscious rose of womanhood,
Looking on Karagwe, beheld in him
A man above the level of the slave,
A palm-tree in a wide, neglected land.

While both, at twilight, on a rustic seat
Sat talking, laughing with that careless mirth
Wherein their race forgot its chains and toil,
A drunken overseer staggered past,
And seeing a woman sitting in the dusk,
Swayed up to her, and caught her by the arm,
And, with an insult, strove to drag her on.
Ruth trembled, fawn-like ; but the negro rose,
And, with his grasp, freed her the white man's hand.
Then in the face the coward struck the slave,
Who neither struck him back nor uttered word.

But to a whipping-post they bound the black,
And many stripes his unhealed shoulders flayed.
Stung by the wrong, but lifted with just scorn,
That men, who claimed to be superior,

Would thus degrade their unoffending kind,
He wept at heart ; no groan, no cry of pain,
Made audible their inhumanity.

Quickly thereafter he was forced to go
And toil beneath the intolerable sun.

In a large basket, on his wounded back,
Up a steep hillside to a cotton-gin,
All the day long, he bore the tyrannous,
Truth-smothering product of the slave-worked fields.

VI.

Ruth, in her ceaseless household cares,
Thought of the dark face and noble heart
Of Karagwe, and truly pitied him.

He, when the labour of the day was done,
Moved through the dusk, between the dewy leaves,
And, softly as a shadow, climbed the wall,
And waited in the garden, crouching down,
Hidden and breathed upon by friendly bloom,
Hoping that she again might come that way.
He saw her, through a window of the house,
Pass and repass, and heard her sweetly sing
A wooing song of love and pity blent ;

But would not call to her, nor give a sign
That he was near ; to see her was enough.
Perhaps, if those she dwelt with knew he came
To meet her in the garden, they would place
Some punishment upon her, some restraint,
That she, though innocent, might have to bear.
So he went back again to his low cot,
And on his poor, straw pallet, dreamed of her
As loyally, may be, as any prince,
Lying asleep on down and broidery,
Dreams of his queen.

VII.

Ruth was but tinged with shade.
Her black, bright eyes, both proud and passionate,
Showed that the deep and everlasting soul
Which through their liquid portals saw the world,
Was mixed with elements of storm and gloom.
For never bird of thought flew down her sky,
But that the shadow of its flitting wing
Passed in her eyes. Like leaves along the brink,
Above their depths her thick, long lashes hung.
Such excellent adornment was her grace,
That, though her dress was of the coarsest kind,
Hers was apparel more desirable
Than costly splendour woven by the loom.

VIII.

A vast plantation, joining Dalton Earl's,
Was held by Richard Wain, a hated man—
Hated of owned and hired and in the town.

Where the fair river limited his lands
Seclusion sweet was found by Karagwe.
For there a noble temple, pillared, aisled,
Rose toward heaven. Aloft, the vaulted roof,
Verdure of frieze and cornice, and beneath,
A fragrant carpet and mossed seats of stone—
A grove of pines. Here, hidden in a tree,
Was treasure kept—a bible small and worn.
Before the slave arose the past from it ;
The folk were vague, and their procession seemed
Like figures moving slowly in the dusk ;
Yet One there was, who, centred in great light,
Stood out, determinate, and full of life :
A merciful, pure face, with silken beard ;
Long, golden hair that waved about the neck ;
Mild eyes of deepest azure, thoughtful eyes
Filled with the knowledge of eternity :
A man patient, beneficent, divine,
Friend to the poor, and Messenger of love.

IX.

While walking near the house of Richard Wain,
The slave beheld a paper in the grass,
Whose sheets were closely written, signed and sealed.

Thus came the chance for which he oft had sought,
To learn the older letters of the pen.
That night the writing, wrapped about his book,
Lay nestled in the hollow, up a tree.

There once, indeed, a wedded pair had been,
Which with white softness lined the balmy place,
And hatched within it callow occupants ;
These being fledged, all singing flew away.

X.

“ What token shall I give,” thought Karagwe,
“ That she may know from it my love for her,
And I learn whether love has answered mine ? ”
A straying bee, of golden and sweet wealth,
He caught and killed, and carried it to Ruth.
“ I bring you, Ruth, a dead bee for a sign ;
For if to-day you wear it in your hair,
When once again you come to walk this path,
I thus shall find that you are mine alone,
Willing to be my wife, and share my lot,

And let me toil with you like bee with bee ;
But if you do not wear it, then I shall care
No more for anything ; but waste my life,
A bee without a queen." Ruth said no word ;
But when she went that way at one-starred dusk,
The dead bee glimmered in her dusky hair.
And meeting him for whom the sign was meant,
She laid her hand in his, and fondly smiled.

XI.

Came, trilling wildly sweet, a bird-like voice,
When Richard Wain next day went riding past,
And caught, mid foliage, of Ruth a glimpse—
A momentary picture framed in flowers.
"The prize I covet most, is near," he said ;
"She shall be mine to-morrow, weep who may !"

Returning on his over-driven horse,
When shadows slowly lengthened from the west,
He near the house dismounted, fastened rein,
Strode to a threshold, asked for Dalton Earl,
And told him for what chattel he had come.
The maid was not for sale, the other said.
"You talk at random now," said Richard Wain ;
"You know I hold the deed of all your lands.

If it is true, the wench is not for sale,
Your lands shall be for sale, at sheriff's sale !"
Pale turned the haughty planter, Dalton Earl,
And knowing, for his trouble came of it,
Whose blood made blue the fiery veins of Ruth,
Fixed blindly on a price immoderate.
"To-morrow I shall come," said Richard Wain,
"And take the girl, and pay the price I choose."

When Dalton Earl had told Ruth of her fate,
She swooned, and to the floor fell heavily.
Recovering, she rose upon her knees,
And begged of him that she might still remain.
At this he told her how the lands were held,
And that, if she went not, they would be sold.
"Then let the lands be sold, and sold again ;
If his, they are not yours. What good will come
If I do go to him ? then all is his ;
And I have given my hand to Karagwe.
Oh, it will break my heart to go away !"

XII.

To Karagwe's low roof Ruth went that night,
And said in loud, wild words the evil news,
She must be slave and worse to Richard Wain.
Sadly he strove to soothe her pain of heart

With consolation from the book he read ;
For, to the souls of black and Afric slaves,
The gospel came unhindered by a doubt ;
And there accepted freely, being free,
Was rapturous delight enthusiasm !
Masking the dreary face of hopelessness
With gospel cheer, the negro talked with Ruth,
While walking toward the home of Dalton Earl.
Glory of night, the restless moon, appeared—
A pale cloud-sheeted ghost of a dead day,
Gliding abroad to ease the ache of hell ;
For heavy sorrow, disappointment deep,
Sickens the heart not only, but the eyes,
Transforming nature to ill shapes of gloom.

XIII.

A troublous morning came to Valley Earl,
And Ruth was sold from him whom most she loved.

The sad day died, and in its vaulted tomb
Karagwe lolled upon the river's bank,
His mind a flowing tide that wandered back
Along the course and valley of the past.
It eddied round his loss as round a rock,
And roused therefrom the fanged snake of revenge.
Sprang up the slave, and wildly beat his breast,

His eyes enkindled with an evil fire.
Then came some memory of Holy Writ,
And in the depths the serpent disappeared.
The negro mourned that justice seldom was ;
Yet knew that in God's hand the scales were set,
And, though His poor down-trodden waited long,
They waited surely for the balancing.

A step was heard, and Karagwe beheld,
By dim aid of white moonlight, Richard Wain ;
Behind, another followed stealthily,
With a drawn dagger in his lifted hand.
The steel, as if it feared a deed of blood,
Gleamed to the slave its dread intelligence.
He followed fast the weaponed follower,
Grasped the raised hand, wrenching the blade away,
And stood before the planter, Dalton Earl !
"Forgive," he said. "Forgiveness is a slave ;
She has no pride nor hate ; she does no harm ;
For she is light of heart, and meekly good,
And patient when the lash of anger smites."

Rebuked, the master stood before the slave ;
And Richard Wain, who sneered when he was told
That Ruth and Karagwe had plighted troth,
Went on unscathed, saved by the man he scorned.
Thus Dalton Earl : " I thank you for this act,

Thwarting a bad intent ; yet I had cause
To take the sullied life of Richard Wain.
He drugged the wine he gave me at his house,
Knowing the deed of my plantation there
Was my sole title. While I lay asleep
He stole it from me, and when I awoke,
Feigned I had staked the deed at cards and lost.
For this and more I hate him. To forgive,
Implies the wronger seeks to be forgiven."

XIV.

Like a great thought that full expression finds,
In happy buds mild Spring found utterance.
But never bud or bloom so fresh or fair
As Coralline, daughter of Dalton Earl.

It was in Spring, they say, that Stanley Thane
Came from his northern home and met this May,
This Coralline, fairest in Valley Earl.

XV.

High up, with sapphire over and below,
Blithe birds flew northward, singing as they flew,
And Love flew southward, sighing all the way.
They met him flying, heard him sighing so ;

“ Whither away ? ” they musically asked,
“ Whither away ? and why should Love be sad ? ”
The voice o’ the words of Love is soft and sweet :
“ Southward I go ; but I shall soon return,
And help you in your art, and dwell with you.
You will not flout me, scout me, make me sigh !
O wingers, kindly singers, fare you well ! ”

XVI.

Worthy a maiden’s love was Stanley Thane.
Riches were his, and he had deeply quaffed
From the clear spring of knowledge practical.
Along his veins ran blood from over sea,
Cool English, quick Celtic, strong Huguenot ;
All by the climate blended and subdued
To that distinctive and peculiar kind
Which is American. Dark eyes he had,
Straight, deep black hair, firm, fair rose-tinted flesh,
And the full bloom of evanescent youth.
High thoughts and purposes, like mountain chains
Linked and white-peaked, arose within his mind,
That was as clear and fresh as air at morn.
Hating oppression and intolerance,
Courageous, generous, but firm of will,
Of the strong North he was a character,
A stamp, a type incarnate in a man.

XVII.

Seeing her fair, he boldly kissed her hand ;
He kissed the hand of southern Coralline.
He saw that she was stately, lithe and tall,
And deemed her proud, but thought her beautiful.
What if the air was fragrant, honey-sweet,
With the magnificent magnolia's breath ?
What if the odorous, white avenue,
From house to highway, with magnolia trees
Graceful and tall, was hedged and garlanded ?
He heeded not. The dear, chief flower of all,
The one superb magnolia of a life,
Thrilled at his touch, as with enraptured lips
He kissed the snowy petal of her hand.

He galloped with her through the idle town,
He wandered with her in the orange groves,
And watched, beside the falls, the busy brook,
Which seemed a maid, who, sitting at a loom,
Wove misty lace to decorate the rocks.

XVIII.

Long o'er the writing hidden in a nest
Pondered the slave, and found it was the deed !
Conscience, fearless and prompt to tell the truth,
Upspoke, and said he had no right to it.

Yet if he gave the deed to Dalton Earl,
Unjustly Richard Wain might claim it still.

He thought of Ruth as of the loved who rest,
Mourning for her that she to him was dead,
And once he gathered wild flowers for regret,
And placed them tenderly where Ruth would pass,
As if he someway laid them on her grave.

XIX.

When Richard Wain knew he had lost the deed
He feigned he won at cards from Dalton Earl,
Rage and chagrin were ready at their gate,
Like pent-up water, to rush down the race,
And turn that mill-wheel voluble, his tongue.
If he mistrusted Dalton Earl the thief,
His threat's effect, Ruth's sale, disproved the thought.
Lest he might lose the power he fain would keep,
The waters rushed not, and the wheel was dumb
To tell his secret that the deed was lost.

XX.

A skiff shot out from under-reaching shore,
And Stanley Thane, with stately Coralline,
Sailed down the river through a peaceful vale.
About them hung the shadow of the earth ;

Beneath them flowed the deep and glossy gloom
Reflecting the inaccessible stars.

Already there were portents of dread war,
For Slavery, a dragon fell and foul,
Opposed the youthful knight of Liberty.
But Coralline, within the dragon's spell,
Was mute to what of shame the shape had done,
And praised its hateful life with heated words.
Stanley, who would not weakly hold his peace
And hear a wrong defended, said, "O South,
Your chiefs, who claim the name of democrat,
Pervert the sense of that which they profess.
They democrats ! They do not understand
The baby letters of democracy ;
For they deny that all should govern all,
And will to make men slaves and ignorant.
But God is just ; He knows nor white nor black ;
If war must come, the shackles, cleft amain
By the uncompromising sword, shall fall,
And the whole people of the land be free."

Seeming a dull machine that worked the boat,
The dusky oarsman, silent Karagwe,
Heard the winged words and caught them in his heart.
But Coralline, like an idolatrous
And cruel priestess of an ancient fane,

Who, proud of altars and of sacrifice,
Heard her base god dishonoured, rose enraged.
She scorned the Northern thought of Stanley Thane,
She wished it had not been their fate to meet.
“If that you mean,” he said, “then let us part,
And let us hope we shall not meet again.
Farewell ! for I will see you never more.”
The boat was near the shore ; he sprang to it,
And left her standing darkly in the prow—
Her pride engaged against a host of tears,
As vain Paris at doomed Ilium fought,
To drive the Greeks back to the salty sea.

Oh, far apart as east and west are they
Whom pride divides ! They wander aimlessly ;
They err ; their hope is dead ; their hearts are cold.
O pride ! Oh foolish, shallow, that is stayed
On small and petty points, on nettles, thorns,—
Oh, leave us, and go hence, that in thy room
May bloom the violet, humility !

XXI.

A mighty angel, with triumphant face,
The torch and sword of vengeance in his hands,
Swept o'er a people with the cry of war !
Awake ! the night has passed, and dawn is come !

Sons of the soil, awake ! turn scythes to swords.
Wake, busy town ! and quiet village, wake !
The shame that is nourished stings to the death.
Voices of viol and flute are as dreams ;
But bugle and drum sound a call to arms !
The cannon's pulse, in a prostrate time,
Is the heart-beat fresh of a nobler day.
Oh, strike, though you die, if you make men free.
Awake ! there's war with the South in the south.
There is war begun, and who knows the end ?

XXII.

O false wife, South ! Thy true husband, the North,
Loveth thee yet, though thou wentest astray.
In Truth's great court, where thy trial was held,
No bill of divorce was granted to thee.
Thy child, misshapen, and proud of its shame,
Was not the child of thy husband, the North.
It has led thee into the mire, and raised
To thy famished lips the cup of despair ;
It were better that such a child should die.

XXIII.

Like a grim soldier marching to his death,
A year of battle passed with measured step,
And took its chill decease. Then Richard Wain

Prepared for his departure to the war.
To-morrow he would go, and in the night
He idly sat in his forbidding house ;
Thinking, he drowsed ; his chin couched on his breast ;
A dim lamp wrought at shadows on the walls.
Slowly the sash was raised behind his chair.
Perhaps he slept ; he did not heed the sound,
And Karagwe sprang in and faced his foe.
He held a long knife up and brandished it,
Saying, " As surely as you call or move,
Your life will not be worth a blade of grass ;
But if you do not call, and sign the words
Which I have written on a paper here,
No harm will come, and I shall go away."
He drew the paper forth ; the planter read :

" By virtue of this writing, I disclaim
Title or right or any interest
In Dalton Earl's plantation joining mine."

" Why, this I surely shall not sign," he said.
" You might have asked me to give up your Ruth,
And I should not have minded ; but your game
Lies deeper than a check upon the queen."
" Sign !" cried the negro ; and at Ruth's name
A sudden madness leaped along his nerves,
Like flame among the dry prairie grass :

“ Sign ! for unless you sign this writing now,
You shall not live ; now promise me to sign ! ”
He fiercely caught the planter by the throat,
Starting his quailing eyes : “ Now will you sign or not?
You have ten seconds more to make your choice.”
“ Give me the paper then, and I will sign.”
The name was written, and the negro went ;
But not an hour had passed, before the hounds
Of Richard Wain and Dalton Earl were slipped,
And scenting on the track of his escape.

XXIV.

The slave ran swiftly to the hollow tree ;
There left the paper signed by Richard Wain,
Folding it in the deed ; then took his book,
And up a tireless road fled on and on,
Until he reached the border of a marsh.

The night was dark, but darker still the clouds
Which loomed along the rim where day had gone.
The wind blew cold, and sighing, hastened past,
Escaping, like a slave, the hound-like clouds
Whose thunder-barking sounded deep and far.

Along the dark the bay came dismally,
Of savage dogs upon the negro's track—
Swift, monstrous blood-hounds trained to fight with
men.

He knew a swamp-path safe for hoof or foot,
And even in the blackness followed it,
Finding a covert hummock, where a hut,
Built up of logs by some poor fugitive,
Held a rude thatch against the sun and rain.

XXV.

Men over-estimate what they desire
Through ignorance of it. Credulous Zea
Thinks his betrothed, Possession, is divine ;
But finds she is a mortal like himself.
And in the hut, to which the slave was tracked,
That night was painted, with a facile brush,
On the unwoven canvas of the gloom,
Wild visions of a freedom unrestrained.
For long the slave had thought of Liberty,
And worshipped her, as in that elder time
A tyrant's subjects worshipped, praying her
That she would not delay, but hasten forth,
And bridge the hated gulf 'twixt rich and poor
By making knowledge paramount to wealth,
Freeing the common from their ignorance,
And lifting up the worthy of the world.

Oh, strange, that in our age, and in a land
Where liberty was laid the corner-stone,

A slave, perforce, should be obliged to dream
And dote on freedom, like the poor oppressed
Who lived and hoped long centuries ago !

And slavery to this slave was like a fruit—
A bitter and offensive fruit to taste,—
The fruit of wrong grafted on avarice,
Foul, pulp and pit, with rank and poison sin.
Yet while this fruit was bitter to the core,
Many there were who died for love of it.

Oh, many they who listen through long nights
To hear a footstep that will never come !
There is scarce a flower along the border blown,
From Lookout Mountain to the Chesapeake,
But has in it the blood of North and South.

XXVI.

When Karagwe awoke, above the marsh
The flush and whisper of the morning passed.
Then, when he would have ventured from the door,
A large, black hound arose, and licked his hand.
The dog was Dalton Earl's, and did not know
That souls were bought and sold with current coin ;
He only knew with joy he saw his friend.

Karagwe went back, and on a paper wrote :
“ Your dog has harmed me not, and you should not,

I never wronged you ; I have served you well.
I risked the life of him who wronged us both,
To do you one great service for the last.
You made me slave, you sold my plighted wife,
And now you set your blood-hounds on my track,
Because I flee to freedom that is mine.
Although you wrong me, I repay with good,—
For in the nested hollow of a pine,
In the high grove, on ground of Richard Wain,
Is the lost deed which holds your house and lands.”
The paper fastened at the hound’s strong neck,
The negro bade him go, and forth he leaped ;
And Dalton Earl read what the slave had sent,
And found his deed safe hidden in the tree,
And that day made an end of all pursuit.

XXVII.

Long wandered Karagwe to find the North,
Fed from the wild abundance that the sun
Ripens on southern soil. Above him leaned
Tall trees with bowers 'neath their wrestling arms,
Fringed with dependent moss, and overrun
By thorn-speared and leaf-shielded Vandal vines.
Beneath, the water, murky with decay,
Stirred with a sluggish ripple, where had plunged
The wrinkle-throated alligator, clad
In the dark coat of his impervious mail.

Like mermaids with white faces to the sky,
An idle bevy floating on their backs,
The water-lilies lay, and over them
Birds of gay song and wing in sunshine flashed,
Or poised in thickets of lush emerald,
Where shrub and vine and frondage intertwined
As inextricably as the affairs of men.
This freedom to excess in mindless things
Appeared a happy omen to the slave,
That henceforth he should have such liberty.

XXVIII.

But now across his solitary path
A blue, wide, ebbing river sought the sea.
Two heavy logs he launched and firmly withed,
Then, with a pole for help if he should need,
Cast off, and drifted slowly down the stream.
Thus for long days he drifted, eating not,
Save of the berries growing near the shore.
Once he enlarged the uncomfortable raft,
And set a bushy sapling for a sail.
The wind and tide agreed, and pushed him on ;
He passed at night a hushed, street-lighted town,
And saw at morn the hot sun leave the sea.
Near by, a red buoy tossed upon the waves,
As if it were the ocean's joyful heart,

Or his own heart upon a sea of hope ;
And ships were in the offing, sailing on
Like the vague ships that with our hopes and fears
Put from their havens to return no more.

Ere night he hailed a vessel, gained the deck,
And found he was with friends, and on his way
To freedom, 'neath the steadfast northern star.
But he, without a dread had left the land,
And sailed away, to have his wish or die.

Thus ever he who seeks his heart's desire
Sets forth upon a sea unknown and large,
And leaves behind the fixed and certain shore.
The rooted trees exclaim, " The fool will go.
There is no land beyond, for all is sea,
And it is wide and deep. He shall go down,
And the wet turbulence will bury him."
He takes no heed ; the trees are left behind ;
He sails away, and in his dream beholds,
With peaceful harbour, under pleasant sky,
The city of Delight, his heart's desire.

XXIX.

Three years of war, three years of blood and tears,
And Richard Wain in front of battle fell,
Where, grim with powder, he led on his men,

With cheer or oath, and gory, waving sword,—
As if, through him, the spirit of his cause,
Foul Slavery, expressed itself, and fought
With desperation for its ending life.

XXX.

Forth in the garden dewy and perfumed,
Walked Coralline and Ruth, sad and alone ;
For Ruth was owned again by Dalton Earl.

Although two hearts when severed by weak pride,
Dwell far apart, there is a sting remains
That rankles, and the melancholy years
Of separation are more sad than death.
Or look or smile to Coralline recurred
Dreaming of Stanley Thane. She thought of him
Regretfully, with tender trust. Her love
Was poured out on him, and her heart
Stood like an emptied vase. Down from the north
Came tidings of his daring ; and the war
And the deep gloom of absence were as night,
And he the lovable, exalted star
Whose image was reflected in her soul
As in a shadowed lake.

“From day to day
I grieve,” said Coralline, “that Stanley Thane

Left me so rashly, and that he thinks
My hasty words were said with earnest thought.
Would that a bird might fly to him and sing :
' She loves you, Stanley Thane, she loves you still.'"
Ruth answered quickly, " Your wish is heard ;
For I will go to him who once was here,
And say to him the words that you have said."
Then fell the other on the quadroon's neck,
And kissed her through her tears, and promised her
Her freedom, if she went to Stanley Thane.

That night one stole a knife, and sharpened it,
Sipping the poison sweetness of revenge.
Those she loved best were now all lost to her ;
Her child was sold away, she knew not where.
She thought of Stanley Thane, and felt regret
That he should be the victim she must strike ;
But wished that Coralline might look on him
After this violent knife had wrought his death.

XXXI.

Alike unmindful of all joy and woe,
Insensible to both, the day-god rose
From the black valley of unmeasured space
To the great summits of the waking world.

Then crazed Ruth started forth from Valley Earl.
For weary days she journeyed toward the north,
And reached the camp she sought. . Passing the guard,
She in the night discovered Stanley's tent,
And stealing in, bent o'er him while he slept.
He dreamed of Coralline, and sighing, said,
"Dear Coralline, forgive me. I was rash."
Then Ruth, who heard, cried, "She forgives ;
She loves you, Stanley Thane,—she loves you still ! "
At this he woke, and saw the woman there,
And saw the weapon held above his breast ;
And a vague horror at the mockery of her words,
Mixed with delight to find them not a dream,
Bound voice and limb as by a wizard's spell.
But a swift hand passed in and seized the wrist,
And snatched the knife ; and mild-faced Karagwe
Confronted Ruth, and turned her rage to tears.

XXXII.

But afterward, Ruth sickened in the camp.
While she lay dying Karagwe stood near,
And holding her thin hand, he sadly said :
"Farewell, farewell ! Forgive the wrongs you had,
That you may be forgiven where you go.
I pray that you will there find happiness,
That God will give you rest and joyful morn

After the toilsome night of these sad years."
Ruth faintly said : " 'Tis sad to die, O friend ;
But it is not so hard when those we love
Are near us, and we see their grief, and feel
We shall not be forgotten while they live.
I know that Coralline with Stanley Thane
Will wed ere long, that they will dwell in peace,
With loving children round them, and be glad
To be alive, and live their days of joy. .
But you and I were slaves ; we could not wed.
Some men are born to laughter and delight,
To rule and always lightly have their will ;
But more are born to sorrow and to tears,
To bear the heat and burden of the day,
To serve and have for wages scorn and blame.
But blame and scorn and sorrow fell to Him
Who will forgive my dark intent of wrong."
She rose up, sitting on the couch, and laid
Her head against the breast of Karagwe,
Pointing toward the east's forerunning gray ;
And saying, with bright eyes, " See ! morning comes."
Then, "'Tis morning !" and " I love you. Oh, fare-
well !"
Breathed out her troubled spirit in his arms.

And at Fort Pillow, when the iron storm
Had gone against us, and the rebels killed

Five hundred men who had laid down their arms,
Karagwe was shot, and with a prayer
For his whole country, he fell back and died.

XXXIII.

O Thou, to whom is neither large nor small,
In whom we trust, and trusting, feel that Thou
Allowest wrong that vaster good may come,
Accept the sacrifice of boisterous war,
To be the red atonement for our sin.
Henceforth let not the rocky echoes roll
The beaten summons from our vales of peace.
Bring Thou true peace, and make our Union strong,
And make us one in heart as one in name,
And let forgiveness heal the cannon's hurt.
For we have battled not against the South,
We battled for the South, to set her free ;
She fought against herself in battling us.
Oh, let there be or South or North no more,
But a free people, generous to share
Their precious liberty with all mankind !

THE AGE OF GOOD.

I HAD a vision of mankind to be :

I saw no grated windows, heard no roar
From iron mouths of war on land or sea ;

Ambition broke the sway of peace no more.
Out of the chaos of ill-will had come
Cosmos, the Age of Good, Millennium !

The lowly hero had of praise his meed,

And loving-kindnesses joined roof to roof.
The poor were few, and to their daily need
Abundance ministered. Men bore reproof—
On crags of self-denial sought to cull
Rare flowers to deck their doors hospitable.

The very bells rang out the Golden Rule,

For hearts were loth to give their fellows pain.
The man was chosen chief who, brave and cool,
Was king in act and thought. Real power is plain,
Despising pomp and show. He seemed to be
The least in all that true democracy.

O Thou, the Christ, the Sower of the seed,

Pluck out the narrowness, the greed for pelf ;
Pluck out all tares ; the time let come, and speed,
When each will love his neighbour as himself !
The hopes of man, our dreams of higher good,
Are based on Thee ; we are Thy brotherhood.

TO RICHARD GRANT WHITE,

ON READING HIS LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE.

I READ your life of Shakespeare late ;
The clock, swift-handed, showed the hour
Of midnight on the numbered plate,
And yet your words with pleasant power
Held my attent inviolate.

I seemed to be in Stratford town,
Our Shakespeare's English Nazareth.
I saw the houses thatched and brown,
The street whose squalor brought it death.
To my own time the past came down.

I saw the Avon wind and glide,
And Sir Hugh Clopton's bridge across,
With fourteen arches cool and wide,
Deep-shadowed in the water's gloss,
Like care that spans some pleasure's tide.

And still the present seemed to me
The age of Queen Elizabeth,
And on the wall of Trinity
I saw the painted shape of Death—
The rude, though strong, Dance Macabree.

To Shottery I seemed to stray,
And passed the house where Shakespeare went,
In idle hours of youthful May,
To wed himself to discontent
And that fair shrew Ann Hathaway.

I saw his lampoon on the gate
Of proud Sir Thomas Lucy's park,
And knew he thus would irritate,
More than deer-stealing after dark,
This pompous Stratford potentate.

Boy-husband, scarcely twenty-one,
Yet with three children round his knees,
It was full time that he had won,
From Fortune's wheel the bread for these;
For mouths must eat, and work be done.

And by the magic of your book,
Which was like something seen, not read,
I saw our Shakespeare as he took
The road for London from the stead,
And his want-shadowed cot forsook.

And by the Aladdin's lamp he bore,
I saw his wondrous works arise,—
Vast palaces of precious store,
Perfumed with flowers, adorned with dyes
Of thoughts that are for evermore.

At Globe or Blackfriars, in his play
Of "As You Like It," him the part
Of faithful *Adam*, sear and gray,
I saw impersonate, with art
That showed a nature fresh as May.

I saw him when he meekly wrote
With Greene and Marlowe and the rest.
Of his own power he took no note ;
For wounded pride within his breast
He sought a simple antidote—

And that to dwell in Stratford town,
And live at ease, a gentleman,
By poverty no more held down,
No more in dread beneath the ban
Of vain Sir Lucy's stony frown.

And so through life the poet passed,
To win a goal of poor pretence ;
Like that old sculptor, who once cast,
For low and paltry recompense,
A statue deemed divine at last.

DONALD.

O my white, white, light moon, that sailest in the sky,
Look down upon the whirling world, for thou art up
so high,
And tell me where my Donald is who sailed across the
sea,
And make a path of silver light to lead him back to me.

O my white, white, bright moon, thy cheek is coldly
fair,
A little cloud beside thee seems thy wildly floating
hair;
And if thou wouldst not have me grow as white and
cold as thee,
Go, make a mighty tide to draw my Donald back to me.

O my light, white, bright moon, that doth so fondly
shine,
There is not a lily in the world but hides its face from
thine;
I too shall go and hide my face close in the dust from
thee,
Unless with light and tide thou bring my Donald back
to me.

A SUIT OF ARMOUR.

A suit of ancient armour in a hall,
 Stands like an unopposing sentinel ;
 I see its past behind it, and recall
 The chivalry that vexed the infidel,
 That waged fierce wars and wrought of woe increase
 In His mild name who is the Prince of Peace.

This unworn armour has a silent speech ;
 To more than steel the steel is riveted,
 And, empty and forlorn, appears to teach
 The patient hope which oft is felt and said,
 That soon all armour to disuse shall pass,
 With visored helmet, hauberk, and cuirass.

There were true knights when mail like this was worn
 In the long struggle for Jerusalem.
 If o'er the crescent the red cross was borne,
 They died content. But fame yet lived for them,
 And troubadours their brave deeds rhymed upon
 From stubborn Antioch to Ascalon.

Noblest the knights while they were few and poor ;
 They vowed to tell the truth, to help the weak,
 To flee no foe and hold each trust secure.
 They let their simple dress their lives bespeak.

Firm in misfortunes, they had strength to be
Humble and generous in victory.

But when they rose to luxury and power,
 When wealth and honour, bright-eyed falcons, stood
On their triumphant armour—in that hour
 Went forth from chivalry the soul, the good,—
And knighthood meant a price, and turned away
From rugged duty into weak display.

For while slow progress up its path has toiled,
 Who has been faithful, who has seized its gains?
As the clean truth, if handled, soon is soiled,
 So, good is seldom pure that long obtains,
And the great cause which seeks to help and bless
Dies at the golden summit of success.

The spirit fled, the body is but dust ;
 It lingers in corruption and decay ;
It cannot look on favour nor mistrust,
 Though many praise it loud who said it nay.
They are too blind to see, too dull to feel,
'Tis empty as this man-shaped shell of steel.

TO THE SUN.

O SUN, toward which the earth's uneven face
 Turns ever round, great emperor of day
 Through whose benign, warm rule all things have life,
 And death that is akin—I sing of thee,
 And yet not I, but that which in me is,
 The life in life, conscience, suggester, muse.

Unlike the Guebres, who, upon the coast,
 Unto thy red down-going offer prayer,
 We hold thee in esteem. We, rather,
 Rising at cool-breathed, night-releasing Dawn,
 Thank the unseen All-giver for thy day,
 Seeing in thee a ray-strung instrument
 Swept by His hand for harmonies of life.

Not we alone salute thy springing beam.
 The mountains do thee homage first of all,
 And hinder with their bold and stony brows
 Thy swift, protracted ray, that elsewhere
 Goes on for ever.

Importunately

Thou callest up the new from out the old,
 And givest consciousness to soulless things.
 Thou sendest forth the lightning-arrowed cloud,

And the coy breeze, a wordless whisperer,
Doth interchange the breath of man and tree.
Thou dost invite the robin from the south,
The oriole and thrush, all tuneful birds,
To trill the story of their long sojourn
In our attentive ears. Whereof they sing,
Their winged adventures, airy accidents,
We may not understand ; but this we know,
The manner of the telling is divine.
Thou whitenest the harvest for our need,
Thou fillest out the wholesome cheeks of fruit
With succulence delicious, and at last
Printest thy setting on autumnal trees—
In rubricated letters publishing
A sad and sylvan moral of decay.

And when the days are brief and nights are long,
When all the ghost-like land is faced with snow,
And the unsatisfied and restless world
Chills at the harsh withdrawal of thy beam,
Then thou art nearest earth. Thus we may learn
That when the winter of our trouble comes,
And the long hours are dark, and God seems far,
Then He is nearest us.

Men cross the deep,
To tread where generations that are dust
Eked out their changing lives, and left behind

Little beyond a ruin and a name ;
But thou, o'erhead, silent, immutable,
Art grown familiar with the scenes they seek,
And hast beheld all times and nations pass.

And thou, O Sun, dost look on other worlds—
On eight-mooned Saturn with his shining rings,
On Jupiter, on Venus, pearl of dusk—
Thou dost behold thy worlds, and touchest each
With the restoring finger of thy ray ;
But we, bound down, shut in by this frail life,
Shall not know fully of them till the soul,
Drawn by the sunbeams of immortal love,
Out of this seed-like body blooms on high.

Uncertainly we bode the life to come,
Yet deem we stand upon the topmost height
Material. But this, our consciousness,
That separates the evil from the good,
Baffles itself, and knows not what it is,
Save that its being is enlinked with thine.
Parent of energy, of commerce, arts,
Swinging the scythe, and wielding sword and pen,
Although the generations come and go,
Although the ages lengthen out the past,
Spun by this pendulous, swift wheel of earth
In its fixed orbit by thy influence,

Thou makest man the same. He changes not, but
stands

With firm, unyielding feet upon all time.

The years increase ; but still to-morrow holds
Its one remove away. Our yesterdays
Are like a lonely and a ruined land
Wherein a breeze of recollection sighs—
A fading land to which is no return.
Yet some misuse their insecure, brief hour
With petty hatreds, though they should forgive,
Since to forgive makes all things beautiful,
And shows a spirit in accord with thine.

O thou, above, large, tolerant, serene,
Kind, generous, and bountiful of good,
That shinest on the poor and on the great,
Alike on sterile waste and fruitful field,
Dawn soon about this seeded, speeding world,
When every heart shall be as kind as thine
That in its sympathy hath room for all.

•

HOW SWEET TO LIVE FOR EVERMORE !

THE dark-robed nun, Night, walked the sky,
 White-hooded in a moonlit cloud ;
 Pale-cheeked she was, and peaceful browed ;
 Her whispered prayer, the breeze, went by ;
 Uncounted shone afar on high,
 Her rosary o'er which she bowed.

Bright moons the darkest shadows make ;
 And now there lay, with sparkling vest
 Upon its pure and quiet breast,
 An agate-hued deep-shadowed lake.
 Wherein a brook leaped from a brake,
 And found thereafter endless rest.

Along the banks white poppies grew,
 Whose veins a drowsy blood inclose ;
 On lulling sprays to find repose,
 The flight-worn songster hither flew ;
 The languid lily downward drew
 To that soft bed wherefrom it rose.

And hither came from scenes remote
 Two hearts united by the vow ;
 They gained the mossy brink, and now

One set a stranded skiff afloat,
And soon the flowing peace their boat
Molested with a gilded prow.

“We two are bound in one love-sheaf,”
He said, and dipped the dripping oar ;
“Here all is rest : what would we more ?
For, is not God in every leaf ?
The earth is good, and all belief
Takes from it to the heavenly shore.

“How palpable, this downy calm !
The soft-winged breezes breathe and die ;
In silvered sleep the waters lie ;
The thrush in dreams is taught his psalm
By angels from a land of balm ;
God’s awful silence fills the sky.

“To our behoof this peace is blest,”
He said, and stayed upon his oar ;
“If alway near such Eden shore,
And by no bolder breezes pressed,
Life’s waters might so brightly rest,
How sweet to live for evermore ! ”

But she, who heard with dreamy eyes,
Said softly, with a look afar,
“Your longing, love, would set a bar

Between us and the heaven we prize,
And hinder faith, that spans the skies,
An unseen bridge from star to star.

“Not I the bounds of peace would cramp,
But widen them to every sphere.”
Then on her face, upturned and clear,
The nun, Night, with her silver lamp
Seeking for rest, of dewy damp
Let fall a sympathetic tear.

But in our idlest longings lie
A use to heal the soul of pain.
The heart is quicker than the brain ;
We long for rest ; we would not die ;
We beat our wings against the sky
Like butterflies against the pane.

And thrilled by calm through each pleased sense,
And briefly freed from work, life's oar,
He said, “If we might shut the door
On pain and sorrow issued thence,
And dwell in healthful indolence,
How sweet to live for evermore !”

LOW LIVES WE LED OF CARE AND SIN.

Low lives we led of care and sin,
 Low lives with but one aim, to win
 Our brown and bitter bread.

We dwelt beside a mountain's base,
 And evermore its rugged face
 Rose sphinx-like overhead.

We could not read a meaning there ;
 We merely saw, high up in air,
 A pile of rocks and trees.
 We had not climbed the massive height ;
 Enough for us the small delight
 To sit betimes at ease.

"What good," we asked, "would come to stand
 Upon the wind-swept table-land,
 And look on fields below ?"
 We sneered, content within the vale ;
 We had nor will nor wish to scale
 The cliffs where cedars grow.

But haply on a cloudless day,
 A neighbour on his journey's way,
 Saw, at the sunset hour,
 The sun upon our mountain high
 Rest, like a golden butterfly,
 Upon an azure flower.

All thoughts at last perform some use ;
The good or ill that they produce
Must soon or late befall.
When he returned, our neighbour said,
"There may be fertile lands o'erhead
Upon the mountain-wall."

Straightway we climbed the flinty crags,
And vines above us waved like flags
Of welcome o'er a town.
Past June-clad plains we wandered by,
And lakes in which the loving sky
Narcissus-like looked down.

Even the grass beneath our feet
Was somewhat greener and more sweet
Than that which grew below.
We breathed a purer, better air;
Our lives seemed wider, fairer, there,
And earth with love aglow.

O ye, long used to care and sin,
Look up ! take heart ! and strive to win
A high and noble ground !
Think not that Virtue sits alone,
Withdrawn, on frowning peaks of stone,
Where only thorns abound.

She rather has the mountain dells
Where, with her kin, in peace she dwells :
 Around her all is fair ;
And in her pleasant, quiet meads,
The flowers of noble thoughts and deeds
 Enrich the healthful air.

A MORNING PASTORAL.

If somehow Bichat's theory be true,
 That animal and all organic life
 In man combine and culminate—the brain
 The animal, the heart organic life—
 I know wherefore my love unasked goes out
 To meadows, trees, clear brooks, and distant hills,
 For thus I am their fellow and their kin.

I chiefly like, while yet the day is new,
 To walk among the fields along the road,
 And brim my heart with Nature as I pass.
 The droning grasshoppers are not in tune ;
 But here upon a leaf, one seems to drowse,
 A sleepy sailor in an open boat,
 Rocked on the uneasy billows of the air—
 A Palinurus, who, while piloting
 The Trojan galleys on disastrous seas,
 Drowns into death, among the Siren rocks.
 Here, where I pass, a noisy brook gets force,
 And, plunging under alders, leaps along
 Down to the fallow, rioting like a boy.
 Anon I start a thrush, and up he wings,
 And with a trail of music darts away,
 Seeking the old republic of high woods,
 Where he is citizen, but where his kind

Use melody for speech, and have no flag
Save the unfurlèd leaf that shades the wicker home.
Over the yonder tree-tops flies a crow
That boldly vents his unpopular caw,
And breasts the stubborn wind to gain the shore,
And cram his hungry crop with loathsomeness.
As well he likes the thing unsavoury
As when his master, Phœbus, dwelt on earth.
All flowers beside the way are friends of mine,
And once I knew a meditative rose
Which never raised its head from bowing down ;
But drew its inspiration from the stars.
It bloomed and faded here upon the road,
And, being a poet, wrote upon the air
With fragrance all the beauty of its soul.
I pause beneath an overhanging elm,
Where, cut in granite of the vine-grown wall,
The wide mouth of a quaint, conspicuous face,
Speaks to all thirst with visible eloquence.
Beside it sits a beggar on its trough,
Who craves with quivering lip an alms from me.
I give him from my earning, and go back
Toward the loud city with a lighter heart.

A GUARDIAN ANGEL.

With wings of love as stainless and as white
 As snow untracked or clouds against the blue,
 Clothed with God's peace, and radiant with light
 Which over him his aureola threw,
 An angel dwelt in heaven, and all bliss,
 Unending and unspeakable, was his.

Out of God's will, to this dear angel's heart
 Came in grand music what in words is said :
 "To yon far sparkle of the earth depart—
 That bridge the short-lived generations tread—
 And I will give it thee to guard and tend
 A soul untried, and be his guide and friend.

"Or guide, or friend, truth-whisperer, or guard,
 Be each, and all in one, to keep him true ;
 Yet, if he long neglects thee, and makes hard
 And wearisome this duty thine to do,
 Thou needst not wait to strive against his sin,
 But, at the gates uplifted, enter in."

Swift are the rays, the arrows of the morn,
 That pierce the dark and shoot across the sky—
 Swifter the angel who, through ether lorn,
 Pierced on displayed, wide wings, until on high

God's joy-paved city dwindled to a star,
And the small earth, a horned moon, shone afar.

Hither, in silent flight, he took his way,
And found at noon, beside a shady stream,
A youth asleep, and o'er him, where he lay,
The angel hovered, mingling with his dream ;
And in the dream a cloud-land of delight
Was seen, with wings and robes of shining white.

The record of our lives in heaven's book,
With liquid pearl of tears is written down.
Filled with high hope the handsome youth forscok
The peaceful village for the crowded town,
And met the varied shapes of vice and sin
Which, clothed in soft enticement, walk therein.

Long fought he there 'gainst their misleading charms
Helped by the angel in his troubled breast.
Arose no peal of strife, no noise of arms,
But fierce and giant warfare, wild unrest,
Raged in the soul ; and Virtue's citadel,
Stormed by the lower passions, crashing, fell.

When these have sway, how dark the soul and drear !
His gentle friends, who saw with inner eyes,
Beheld the man debased, yet, ever near,
An angel following with ruthless cries,

Beseeching him his erring steps to cease,
To turn and rest upon the heart of Peace.

With holy angels there is joy in pain—
Their pain is borne for love, and love is joy.
This angel would not now return again
To heavenly doors ; but here would have employ
To lead a soul to pleasant fields beyond,
From the dark slough of error and despond.

His still, small voice fell fainter—less and less—
Pleading and sad as following he went ;
And the long years were one with weariness,
Till to the man, life's shadow, death, was sent.
Heeding his patient angel, ere he died
He worshipped Him whom he had crucified.

Then bearing in glad arms the soul set free,
The angel, with God's glory on his face,
Mounted on wings outspread exultingly,
Trailing his lily robes, and filled with grace,
And, hasting onward to the central star,
Saw heaven, built in grandeur, gleam afar.

Oh, happy are the meetings that await
The crossers to that star of higher powers !
The soul beheld the angel was a mate
Whom he had loved and lost in boyhood hours.

Ah ! who can tell ? Perchance, to all, God sends,
As guardian angels, their departed friends.

Perchance, to all, the loved and lost come back
From out the faith-seen mansions built on high,
To comfort us when trouble, wild and black,
Glooms in the heart, and overclouds its sky—
Coming to share unseen with us the years,
And raise in splendour what is dark in tears.

A TROUBADOUR'S SONG.

So many poets die ere they are known,

I pray you, hear me kindly for their sake.

Not of the harp, but of the soul alone,

Is the deep music all true minstrels make :

Hear my soul's music, that I may beguile,

With string and song, your festival awhile.

The stranger, looking on a happy scene

Where unknown faces shine with love and joy,

Feels most he is a stranger. On this green

Which fronts the castle, seeing your employ,

My heart sank desolate ; yet came I near,

For welcome should be found at all good cheer.

Of Provence I, and ask me not, I pray,

“ If not in Provence, where may love abide ? ”

For there, Neglect, who, coming down the way,

Or priest, or Levite, takes the other side,

Neglect, false neighbour, passing, flung the scoff :

“ Honour is cold, and is the most far off ! ”

Love is the key-note of the universe,—

The theme, the melody. Though poorly decked,

Masters, I ask but little of your purse,

For love, not gold, is best to heal neglect.

Love makes true fame if love is widely sown ;

Bloom, flower of love !—lest I, too, die unknown.

THE PICTURE.

A widow by her landlord was oppressed
To pay at once her backward coin of rent ;
For he, cursed by the wealth that should have blessed,
Forgot that he, too, in a tenement
Dwelt, with unpaid arrear ; and, surely, he,
More than the widow, lived in poverty.

Though, by the poorest, gold has been obtained,
For God's sweet love no yellow price will pay.
Blind to the peaceful joy he might have gained,
The craven landlord, on a winter's day
That pierced with cold and wind-thrust icy sleet,
Drove forth the widow to the roofless street.

Her clinging son, with elfin prattle, sought
To charm away her grief ; yet, in his heart,
By the indignant pencil of his thought,
The shameful scene was drawn in every part.
There lived the widow's tears, and hard and base
Stood out the likeness of the landlord's face.

Like breaking waves, year after year rolled up,
Whitened and ceased. The widow's son became
A truthful painter, in whose life's bright cup
The world dissolved the tasteless pearl of fame.

Then, with his brush, which spoke in every hue,
The accusing picture in his heart he drew.

Near by the landlord's home the painting hung,
As at his threshold, in a public place ;
To view it came the townsfolk, old and young,
And said, " This is the landlord's ruthless face,
And this the cruel deed that he has done
To the poor widow and her artist son."

Guilt is no fettered slave ; it ever speaks,
And of its troubled owner, scorns the part.
The landlord saw the picture, and his cheeks
Flamed with the guilty watch-fires of his heart.
In vain he brought temptations, coined and vast,
To lay the brush-raised spectre of his past.

O Memory ! O artist of still thought,
Painting our every deed, whate'er it be,
May we so live, that by thee shall be wrought
No scene which, published, we should blush to see ;
But on thy dreamy canvas let us find
Abundant peace in alms-deeds pure and kind.

DOCTOR GUTHRIE.

In Edinburgh, beside the common street,
Kind Doctor Guthrie saw, one afternoon,
A little girl in rags, with bare, brown feet,
And eyes as tearful as a clouded moon.
She sobbed and wept as if there stood across
Her dark and friendless path a giant loss.

Good Doctor Guthrie, pausing by her side,
Asked her to tell him all her cause for woe.
"My mother gave me sixpence, sir," she sighed,
"And to the baker's yonder bade me go
And buy a loaf of bread for us to eat ;
But I have lost the money in the street.

"Oh, she will beat me so when I go back !
What shall I do ? I know not what to do !"
And cried as if in torture on the rack.
But, pitying the child, the Doctor drew
A sixpence forth, and gave her ; and he said,
"Weep not, my lass, for I will get your bread."

He led her to the place where bread was sold,
And while he bought a loaf, made free to say,
"The child was sent for this ; but, I am told,
She lost the entrusted sixpence on the way."

The baker answered, " 'Tis a trade with her :
It seems she's always losing sixpence, sir."

Though indignation looked from Guthrie's eyes,
No word of haste flashed hot from heart to tongue.
He felt a larger, braver pity rise
That such deceit should dwell in one so young.
And, bending down, said to the child that she
Was now an object of true charity.

Knowing she earned her livelihood by sin,
He felt more pity for her than before.
He sorrowed at the want the poor were in ;
But at all wickedness he sorrowed more.
Weak charity had he if he should dole
Bread for the body and neglect the soul.

Thence to her home of squalor and decay
The awestruck child and gentle Guthrie went.
It was a nest for wingless birds of prey,
That early by an old man taught, were sent
To raven on the town. The little girl
Was quickly rescued from the vile gray churl.

RECOMPENSE.

IN spring, two robins from the warmer lands
Built a brown nest upon an unsafe limb
Of the tall tree that by my window stands,
And every morn they praised God with a hymn ;
And, when a certain season passed away,
Five light-green eggs within the building lay.

Above the rush and clatter of the street,
Devotedly was guarded each green trust,
And the round house was an abode most sweet,
Roofed with awaiting wings. Better to rust
With iron patience, than forego a hope,
And pent life in the shells was felt to grope.

But one dread day, before the sun went down,
A cloud arose, a black and monstrous hand,
That robbed the sunset of its golden crown.
A windy shudder shook the frightened land.
The portals of the storm were opened wide,
And pealing thunder rolled on every side.

Then was it some unchained malicious gust
Troubled the spray whereon the nest was made,
And to the ground the soft-floored dwelling thrust,
And wrecked its hapless store. The birds, dismayed,
Shrilled their unusual grief, and beat the air
With wings whose very whirl was like despair.

At dawn, my neighbours, living o'er the way,
Sent me the whisper that their babe was dead ;
And, when they led me where the body lay—
The free, winged spirit's shell, untimely shed—
And the wild cries of their distress I heard,
I thought with pity of each parent bird.

Yet grief is but a cloud that soon is past ;
For there the mated robins came once more,
And built again a nest, compact, and fast
Upon the tree that grows before my door ;
And in it, from the window, could be seen
Five sources of sweet music, new and clean.

Time passed, and to the good home opposite
Another babe was born, and all the love
That was bereft that fierce and stormy night,
Fell to the latter child as from above :
And in the nest five yellow mouths one day,
Of their impatient hunger made display.

We love our dead, and hold their memories dear ;
But living love is sweeter than regret.
God's ways are just, and, though they seem severe,
He can give back with blessings greater yet
Than we have lost. He chastens for some good,
That in our weakness is not understood.

MAY IN A VILLAGE.

OUR old colonial town is new with May.

The aged elms that clasp across the streets,
Grow greener sleeved with opening buds each day.

Still this year's May the last year's May repeats.
Even the old stone houses half renew
Their youth and beauty as the old trees do.

High over all, like some divine desire

Above our lower thoughts of daily care,
The leaden-coloured, tall, religious spire

Adds to the quiet of the spring-time air ;
And o'er the roofs the birds create a sea,
That has no shore, of their May melody.

Down through the lowlands now of lightest green,

The undecided creek winds on its way.

There the lithe willow bends with graceful mien,

And views its likeness in the depths all day ;
While in the orchards, flushed with May's warm light,
The bride-like fruit-trees dwell, attired in white.

Beyond, the caravan of mountains stands,

The camel-backs blue-laden with the sky ;
And on them oft is laid by unseen hands,
Like costly merchandise that men may buy,

The silk of sunset clouds, and all the rare
And delicate wide lace of hazy air.

So, like a caravan, our outlived years
Loom on the introspective landscape seen
Within the heart. And now, when May appears,
And earth renews its vernal bloom and green,
We but renew our longing, and we say :
“ Oh, would life evermore might be all May !

“ Would that the bloom of youth which is so brief,
The bloom, the May, the fulness ripe and fair
Of cheek and limb, might fade not as the leaf—
Would that the heart might not grow old with care,
Nor love turn bitter, nor fond hope decay ;
But soul and body lead a life of May ! ”

IN HANGING GARDENS.

In an old city, so the Rabbins tell,

Lived a fair lady having youth and wealth,
Who in the hanging gardens loved to dwell ;

And like a shadow, and as still as stealth,
She walked the soundless paths that climbed to kiss
The sun above the grand metropolis.

Here stair on stair, with heavy balustrade,
And columned hybrids cut in rigid stone,
And vase, and sphinx, and obelisk, arrayed,
And arched wide bridges over wheelways thrown.
Valleys of heaven the gardens seemed to be,
Or isles of cloud-land in a sunset sea.

The lady, daughter of some prince or king,
Was loved by one of poor and lowly birth.
He gave her gems enclosed in toy or ring,
Trifles of cost—of value for their dearth ;
But she was used to greater gifts than these,
And their small beauty failed her heart to please.

The Soul is child of Heaven, and when the World,
Her lover, brings his presents, wealth and fame—
Wealth, a bird jewelled ; fame, a ring impearled—
She is not satisfied. She bears no blame ;
But dreams of hanging gardens pathed with bliss
Above a golden-domed metropolis.

IN THE VALLEY.

THIS is the place—a grove of sighing pines ;
 Their fallen tassels thatch the roofs with brown,
 The long and narrow roofs, 'neath whose confines
 No dweller wakens. Though the rains weep down,
 Though winds, the mighty mourners, o'er the spot
 Go unconsolated, the inmates waken not.

Along the unbusy street my way I keep,
 Between the houses tenanted by death,
 And seek the place where lies my friend asleep,
 Alien to this the life of light and breath.
 And here his grave, o'ergrown with heliotrope,
 Makes recollection seem as sweet as hope.

For he, my friend, was gentle, wise and true ;
 Pleasant to him a beggar's thankful word ;
 He spoke no ill of others, and he knew
 And loved clear brooks, green dells, and flower, and
 bird ;
 And now the flowers strive to return his love
 By growing here his humble grave above.

Tears have no courage wherewith they may cease,
 And God by grief is oft misunderstood.
 In tears I made complaint of his decease
 Whom I had loved, for he was young and good ;

I made complaint that He who rules on high
Should suffer here the young and good to die.

O Death ! thou warder at the gates of time,
For evermore to those thy hinge swing wide
Whose hope is flown, whose souls are stained with
crime—

Give way to all who are dissatisfied
With their recurrent days, and long to cease ;
Swing wide for such, and to the old give peace.

But close and bar thy dolorous black gates
Against the good, the beautiful, the young,
Whose lamp of hope their life illuminates,
Whose harp-like souls for highest strains are strung.
O warder Death ! give way, swing wide for sin ;
But close, and bar, and keep the good within.

AUTUMN BALLAD.

THE orchard-bars are down, my love, and all across
the lawn

The dahlias raise their veinless hands to plead for
summer gone ;

And the buckwheat and the barley are so bonny and
so blithe,

That they laugh, with quaint obeisance, at the reaper
with his scythe.

Oh, come out in the orchard, sweet, beneath the
apple-trees,

The happy, golden apples of our own Hesperides ;

And pluck the dangling, clustered grapes, in passing
'neath the vine,

Though they weep with luscious tears, my love, and
blush to find them wine.

And this babe-cheeked pear, my darling, which I hold
up to your mouth,

Seems a hanging nest of sweetness, wrought by
summer, winging south ;

But the purses of the chestnuts, by the chilly-fingered
frost,

Have been opened for his booty, and their little
hoards are lost.

Last night you heard the tempest, love—the wind-
entangled pines,
And saw the world-sized clouds that lowered in
gloomy, pencilled lines.
I dreamed the storm a sailor's bride who sat beside
the sea,
And ever wept like rain, and moaned for that which
could not be.

But the morn is rich with sunshine, though the storm
may bode the snow ;
All the woods in northern distance with their gold
and crimson glow.
I have come to seek you, darling, 'mong the queenly
dahlias here,
That you may be my dahlia, in this autumn of my
year.

LOW TIDE.

UNDER the cliff I walk in silence,
While the intrepid waters flow,
And the white birds, changed by the sun into silver,
Glitter against the blue below ;
And the tide is low.

Here years ago, in golden weather,
Under the cliff, and close to the sea,
A pledge was given that made me master
Of all that ever was dear to me ;
And the tide was low.

Only a little year fled by after,
Then my bride and I came once more,
And saw the sea, like a bird imprisoned
Beating its wings 'gainst its bars, the shore ;
And the tide was low.

Now I walk alone by the filmy breakers—
A voice is hushed I can never forget ;
Upon my sea dead calm has fallen,
My ships are harboured, my sun is set ;
And the tide is low.

FARMER DUDLEY.

THE guns were shattering fort and town ;
 The country called for loyal men ;
 The throbbing drums came sounding down
 Along the hills and through the glen.

Young Farmer Dudley heard the call—
 The nation's is the voice of God—
 He left his oxen in the stall,
 The ploughshare in the broken sod.

He left the farmhouse by the lane,
 His wife whose love opposed his will ;
 He left, with pangs of tender pain,
 The little grave upon the hill.

* * * *

The days go on from year to year ;
 Still stands the farmhouse as before ;
 The flowers the little grave grow near :
 But Farmer Dudley comes no more.

WINTER DAYS.

THE winter bourgeons from the north,

The forests bare their sturdy breasts
To every wind that wanders forth,

And in their arms, the lonely nests
That warmed the birdlings long ago,
Are egged with drifted flakes of snow.

No more the robin pipes his lay,

To greet the flushed advance of morn ;

He sings in valleys far away ;

His heart is with the south to-day ;

He can not shrill among the corn ;

For all the hay and corn are down,

And garnered in the generous barns ;

And all the leaves are changed to brown ;

An icy hand is on the tarns ;

And on the stream which cuts the plain,

A diamond necklace, frost and snow,

Fairer than that which, long ago,

Sir Rohan staked a name to gain.

But colder far than winter days,

And colder far than snow or frost,

The heart whose early hope is lost,

Whose birds of joy have ceased to sing ;

Dead winter glooms about its ways,

But never promise of the spring.

WHILE THE DAYS GO BY.

I SHALL not say, our life is all in vain,
 For peace may cheer at last the barren hearth ;
 But well I know that, on this weary earth,
 Round each joy-island is a sea of pain—
 And the days go by.

We watch our hopes, far flickering in the night,
 Once radiant torches, lighted in our youth,
 To guide, through years, to some broad morn of truth ;
 But these go out and leave us with no light—
 And the days go by.

We see cloud Alps and Andes go and come,
 Dew-thirsty daisies praying them to give :
 We cry, " O Nature, tell us why we live ! "
 She smiles with beauty, but her lips are dumb—
 And the days go by.

Yet what are we ? We breathe, we love, we cease :
 Too soon our little orbits change and fall :
 We are Fate's children, very tired ; and all
 Are homeless strangers, craving rest and peace—
 And the days go by.

I only ask to drink experience deep :
And, in the sad, sweet goblet of my years,
To find love poured with all its smiles and tears
And quaffing this, I too shall sweetly sleep—
While the days go by.

FACIEBAT.

As thoughts possess the fashion of the mood
That gave them birth, so every deed we do
Partakes of our inborn disquietude
That spurns the old and reaches toward the new.
The noblest works of human art and pride
Show that their makers were not satisfied.

For, looking down the ladder of our deeds,
The rounds seem slender. All past work appears
Unto the doer faulty. The heart bleeds,
And pale Regret comes weltering in tears,
To think how poor our best has been, how vain,
Beside the excellence we would attain.

THE END.

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